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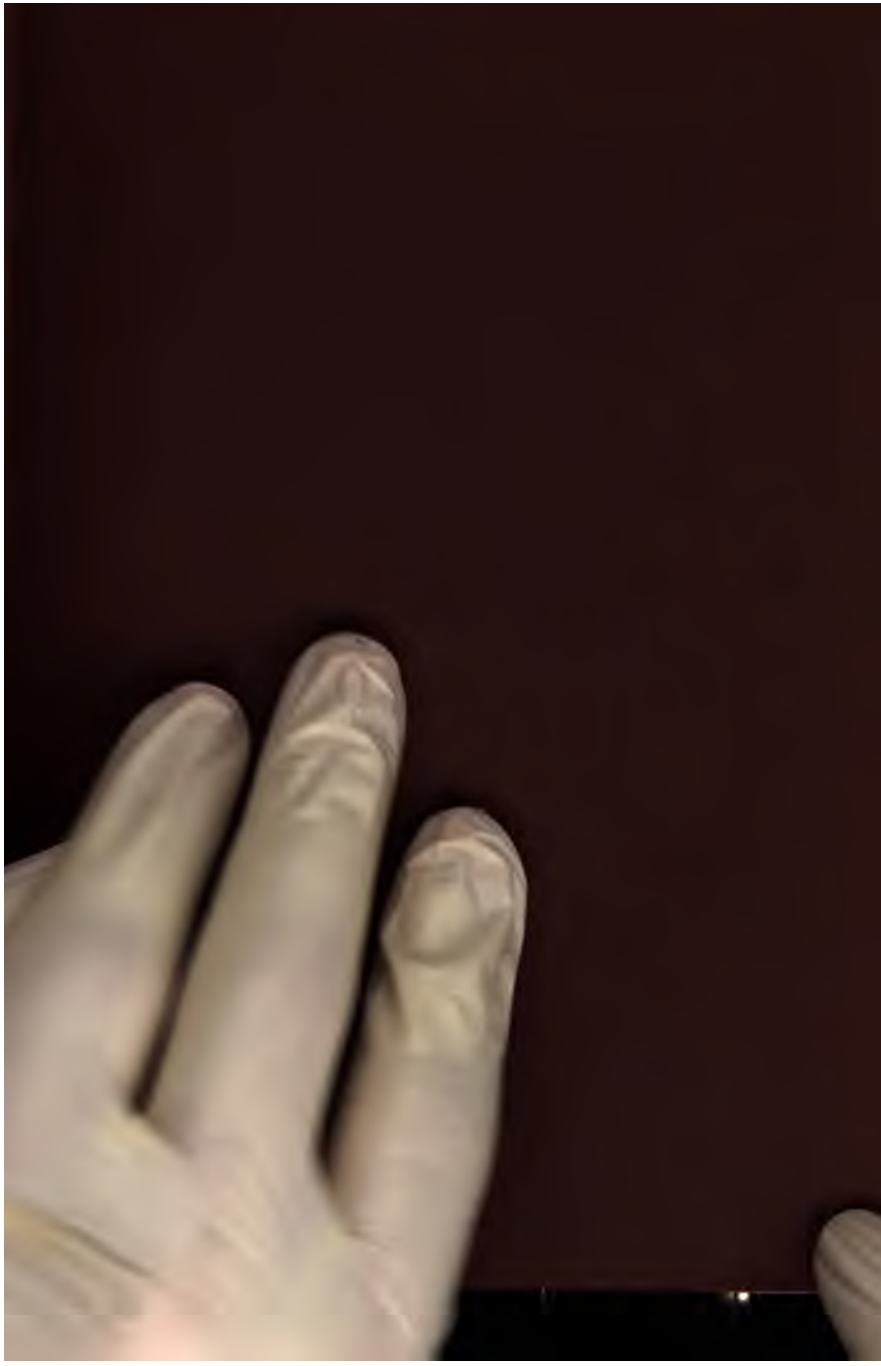

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MEMORIALS

OF THE

REV. JOHN HENRY ANDERSON:

BEING A SELECTION FROM HIS

SERMONS, LECTURES, AND SPEECHES;

WITH A BRIEF

MEMOIR.

BY HIS BROTHER, THE

REV. T. D. ANDERSON, B.A.

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PREFACE.

A week or two before my brother sailed from this country, I was one afternoon sitting with him out of doors, conversing about the future, when I observed, "Talking about an event does not of necessity make it occur. I hope, and believe, this voyage will result in the re-establishment of your health, but if it should not, and if you should not return, will you give me leave to look over your sermons and other manuscripts, and publish a selection for the benefit of your friends in the circuits in which you have travelled. It would indeed be a Memorial Volume." He replied, that if any good could thereby be done, he ought not to prevent it, and for that reason would consent. "Only be sure," he added, "and don't say a great deal about me in the way of praise."

With this wish of my brother, I have endeavoured to comply, and have presented an outline of his life, which those who knew him must fill up for themselves. But I have sought to let him speak for himself by extracts from his journal, so far as space would allow, and have thus given the reader an insight into the workings of his mind, through a medium which, originally, was never intended for the public eye.

I have, however, added some extracts from the letters of friends, who were not in any way fettered in the expression of their opinion, and I trust these may tend to relieve the biographical sketch from a onesidedness of which the writer is only too conscious.

Through the kindness of the Editor, an abridgment of the Memoir appeared in November, 1881, in the pages of the Wesleyan Methodist Magazine.

The purpose of the book, and the limits of the space at my disposal, have prevented me from enlarging on my brother's love of nature, his excursions into the English Lake District or Scotland, his love of general literature, and other topics. The sermons here printed will, on some of these matters, give sufficient evidence. My wish has been to show how complete was his devotion to the work to which he consecrated his life, and how, in spite of a very serious and unavoidable hindrance, he, by God's blessing and assistance, achieved no mean measure of success.

A few typographical errors have crept into the work, which I refrain from pointing out, in the hope they may not be noticed.

My heartfelt thanks are due, and are hereby presented, to the numerous subscribers and friends, who by their generous and timely help, have enabled me to send forth this Memorial Volume without any anxiety as to its financial success. They are entitled to an apology for the delay in issuing it, which has disappointed no one more severely than myself, and which must have greatly taxed their patience.

With one exception, the sermons contained in this book have been chosen from those preached at Brighton during the last year of my brother's ministry.

From the unused stores, it would be easy to compile another volume, which would be no unworthy companion to the present, should any general desire be expressed to that effect.

3, Church Park, Mumbles, near Swansea,
29th March, 1882.

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MEMOIR

OF THE

REV. JOHN H. ANDERSON.

CHAPTER I.

CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH. 1841—1862.

In common with others, our church has often had to mourn the loss in early life of those whose promise of efficient service was great. It is sad to have to say farewell to those who have laboured through a long day of arduous toil, but regret is lessened by the feeling that they have merited their rest, and being worn out, could be of little further use if they continued with us. There is a propriety that we recognize, in spite of our sorrow, in their being removed to a higher sphere of existence, where failing faculties and bodily infirmities are known no more. But when a worker is suddenly arrested in the high noon of his life and efficiency, and compelled to utter the plaintive lament, "my days are past, my purposes are broken off," how much more melancholy the parting. An all-wise and an all-loving God does not and cannot make mistakes, but short sighted mortals yearning for the knowledge that only eternity will give, frequently have to ponder the problem why some of the holiest, most gifted, most devoted of His servants, are, humanly speaking, prematurely taken from the field which needs their labour so much, while others of inferior gifts and graces are left to carry on the work from which they would be so little missed.

The subject of this sketch had the advantage of a godly

ancestry. His grandfather, the Rev Henry Anderson, entered the ministry in the year in which the Rev. John Wesley died, being sent out by him, and after fifty-two years of faithful service departed this life on January 31st, 1843. His father, the Rev. John Anderson, who commenced to travel in 1836, is still actively engaged in circuit work. My brother, John Henry Anderson, was born at Oakham, Rutlandshire, on the 4th of July, 1841.

His early years were spent under the care of his parents, and unmarked by any very noteworthy incident. He like most ministers' sons used to say he would be a preacher when he grew up, and often in winter evenings exercised his oratorical gifts, to the amusement of his mother, and the admiration of his brother and sisters. Thanks to a mother's patient and wise instruction, he was well informed in scripture history, and the stories of the Old Testament heroes generally formed the themes of his juvenile discourses. At the age of nine years, he was sent to Kingswood School. Here he distinguished himself by attention to his studies, gained several prizes, and when he left after six years' residence, had attained the rank of third boy in the school. There is no evidence to show that he was the subject of special religious impressions while at school. He manifested a love for adventure which did not always conform to the rigid limits of school discipline, and which was doubtless fed by reading books of fiction, accounts of travels, and poetical works. Indeed, he eagerly perused all books which appealed to his imagination, and sometimes ventured himself on some poetical effusion, the precursor of something superior in a future day. He was offered the Exhibition to Taunton College, but declined it, preferring to enter at once into a business life. He certainly had no desire to spend his teens in literary occupation, and school life at Kingswood had no such charms for him as to make him eager to enter upon a similar experience at Taunton. He knew that at the longest he would only be there a year, and thought the advantage would not be worth the trouble it would give him. This decision will not appear so strange when it is known that his happiness at Kingswood had been sadly marred by an inordinate tendency to bashfulness, a failing which proved more or less the bane of his life. The

slightest cause would crimson his face with blushes, a circumstance which afforded constant merriment to his heedless schoolfellows, and of which they were not slow to take advantage. No wonder he was loath to undergo the ordeal of facing another set of schoolfellows at Taunton.

He left New Kingswood at Midsummer, 1856. In September of the same year, he was apprenticed to Mr. Haines, Chemist and Druggist, Bromsgrove, and forthwith commenced to learn the art and mystery of that honourable craft. At the Conference of 1857 his father was appointed to Bromsgrove, and thus a very beneficial home influence was exerted upon him at a most critical period of his life. Fidelity to the truth compels the admission that his heart was not in his work. He conscientiously performed his allotted duties, but took very little interest in them. His shyness seemed to increase, and rendered him very abrupt in his manner to the customers, which some of them set down to surliness of temper. His friends were greatly troubled about it, fearing that unless it were conquered, it would seriously hinder his success in life. All this time he was under the impression that some day he would be called to the work of the ministry, and before the great change of regeneration took place, he gave expression to this belief. He had much pleasure in hearing eloquent sermons, and greatly enjoyed the periodical visits of the ministers from Birmingham, who at intervals exchanged with the resident minister at Bromsgrove. But the powerful appeals in his father's sermons deeply affected him, and he was often on the verge of deciding for God. He sometimes almost dreaded Sundays coming, because he knew how uncomfortable he would feel in listening to those faithful exhortations and warnings. At length in April, 1859, Mr. Barnett, a friend of his father's and a zealous and successful local preacher from Marlborough, Wilts, paid a visit to Bromsgrove, and preached one Sunday. After the evening service a prayer meeting was held, an invitation to seekers of mercy to come forward to the communion rail was earnestly given, and feeling it to be a crisis in his life, my brother stepped out into the aisle, half staggered along it to the communion rail, and there in company with others who had followed his example,

earnestly wrestled with God for pardon, but did not obtain it. To his own deep disappointment and that of others, he remained in sorrow, while around him penitents were rejoicing in newly found peace. Still he had so far identified himself with the Lord's people that succeeding steps were not so difficult to take. He no longer resented conversation about religion as an impertinence, and continued to pray for pardon in private, not without hope. For nearly two months he remained unsettled and unhappy. At the beginning of June, the writer of this sketch returned from Kingswood for the midsummer holidays, with his soul filled with the joy of full salvation. Knowing what had taken place, he at once began to talk about religion, and to urge the necessity of personal and immediate trust in Christ. Each day, for the greater part of a week, the conversation was renewed, and much prayer offered for the gift of faith. Sunday, June 5th, came. The sermons preached by our father were attended with great power, and during a lovefeast held after the evening service, the elder son was completely broken down. This was observed by the younger, who followed his brother, and invited him home for prayer. Together they knelt and pleaded for mercy, but without the desired result. The next evening both were present at the public prayer meeting. A young man who the day before had been "Deep wounded by the Spirit's sword," and who was a backslider, was in great anguish about his soul. When the meeting was over, the writer and another friend directed the troubled sinner to the Saviour, my brother being present attentively watching the proceedings. After a time the penitent backslider by faith laid hold of Christ, and his joy at recovered peace was as great as his previous grief. Even my brother could not forbear to say "Praise God." But in a few minutes the now rejoicing backslider said to him, "Now it's your turn," and began to urge my brother to believe. We walked some little distance along the Stourbridge road. It had been a glorious summer evening, but now over the Lickey Hills a storm was gathering, and the frequent flashes of lightning lit up the deepening gloom, suggesting to our minds thoughts about the terrors of the Day of Judgment, and the folly of daring the wrath of an Almighty God. The great obstacle to my

brother's faith was his not being conscious of any change within, of his reception of pardon. We laboured to show him that his duty was to take Christ as his Saviour, and to trust himself, body, soul and spirit, for time and for eternity to His keeping, and that peace with God would follow faith. We enlarged too on the sin and danger of unbelief, until after a few moments' silent thought and prayer, the words were uttered "I will trust," and from that resolution my brother never retreated. He went home clinging by naked faith to Christ, but feeling no joy of pardon. The night came and went; the great Adversary too came and endeavoured to hinder him from trusting, but in vain, and during the day there stole into his mind the sweet consciousness of acceptance, but so gradually that the various stages of the dawning of the heavenly light could hardly be distinguished. But of the fact that he had now "passed from death unto life" there was no doubt on his mind. He wondered that he felt so little joy. He was astonished at the calmness of his feelings, especially when contrasting his case with that of the recovered backslider whom recently he had seen filled with such exultation. But he saw it to be a part of the spiritual discipline through which the Divine Spirit was testing his faith, and he never wavered. Joy did come after a time; the fountains of the great deep of his soul were indeed broken up, and with streaming eyes, and full heart he could give vent to his feelings in those words that have brought "Glory begun below" into many a pardoned sinner's soul,

"My God is reconciled,
His pardoning voice I hear,
He owns me for His child,
I can no longer fear;
With confidence I now draw nigh,
And "Father, Abba, Father" cry."

It was at once evident that he had undergone the great spiritual change. The former abruptness of manner which had given just occasion for complaint passed away. Love to God brought love to man also, which found continual expression in his daily life.

My brother at once began to work for God. He spoke to his young friends on the importance of religion, and had the joy of leading some to Christ. A blessed work of grace commenced in the circuit. Within a month of

his conversion he began to preach; his first public effort being an address during a Sunday evening service at Wildmoor chapel, the manly simplicity and earnestness of which the writer will never forget. His first sermon was preached at Hanbury from the text "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." He was soon at work nearly every Sabbath, and rapidly attained considerable popularity, his sermons, even at this early stage of his ministry, being marked by much of that descriptive power in which afterwards he so greatly excelled. After he had been a local preacher about a year, a young friend of his, in comparing his style with that of some others on the plan, gave his judgment in this terse sentence, "John Henry deals in the vivid;" a criticism the correctness of which the readers of the sermons contained in this volume will be ready to admit.

His apprenticeship ending in the autumn of 1860, he gladly repaired to his father's house at Evesham, and, in preparation for the work to which he had determined to devote his life, gave himself up to study and preaching. His services were highly appreciated, and in March 1861, he was unanimously recommended as a candidate for the ministry. In due course he was accepted by the Conference, and placed upon the President's List of Reserve. His class leader at Evesham writes:

"I have often thought and spoken of the seasons of blessedness which we realized in my class at Evesham, when your late dear brother met with us as a member of it. His deep unassuming piety was so beautiful; his singleness of eye and aim so apparent."

One who was also a member of the class thus writes: "I very often think and talk of those days in dear old Evesham when we were all so happy, the speeches and sermons I listened to from his lips, but especially his prayers in our class. What meetings we used to have, and how we all longed for the class night to come."

He continued to serve the Evesham circuit, being in request for special work of all kinds, until February, 1862, when he was called out to supply the place of the Rev. James Laycock, the second minister of the Stockport (Hillgate) circuit.

CHAPTER II.

PROBATION. 1862—1866.

It is a critical time in his life, when a young minister first enters upon the duties of his important office, and feels the restraints of home influence relaxed. His youth bespeaks for him favourable consideration. He is often courted and followed by the young, and sometimes injudiciously flattered by those whose lengthened experience of life should have taught them more wisdom. If he be socially inclined, he is in danger of wasting precious time that should be spent in study in unprofitable amusements or conversation. If he have any tinge of vanity his head may be turned by indiscriminate applause. If he have the gift of fluency of speech, he may come to depend upon that for success, and form habits of laziness in preparation for the pulpit. He may thus degenerate into a clerical drone, who when the fervour of youthful vigour has passed away, will pall upon his congregations, be a continual difficulty in the stationing committee, and a positive hindrance to the prosperity of God's work wherever for the time being he may be placed. Or he may become a clerical dandy, whose greatest anxiety will be about the cut of his superfine black suit, the folds of his white necktie, and that his hair shall be properly arranged. Or he may become a clerical timeserver, a shepherd caring more for the fleece than the flock, who seldom darkens the doors of the poor members of his church, but never forgets to cultivate the acquaintance of those who keep a good table, live in a fine house, and keep themselves aloof from contact with the masses. From these dangers my brother was mercifully

preserved. He entered upon his work with a strong sense of its responsibility and importance, and with a firm determination to become a workman "not needing to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." He generally wrote his sermons out fully, and committed them to memory, but did not confine himself slavishly to the manuscript. But he often used outlines for week evening sermons, as well for the practice it gave him in extemporaneous speaking, as for the saving of time for reading which it secured. He adhered to this system more or less throughout his ministry, making use of notes to assist his memory, save him from embarrassment, and give those facilities for extempore utterance, which the fear of losing the thread of his discourse might have restrained. Thus he was preserved from being a mere *reciter* of sermons; feeling free to enlarge on any topic in his discourse according to the circumstances of the time.

After he had been in Stockport a few weeks, and begun to feel at home, his conscience was stirred on the subject of pastoral visitation. Only those who knew how unconquerable was his innate bashfulness can form any idea of what a heavy cross he had to take up in the discharge of this duty. To a man of a free social turn, who can make himself at home anywhere, the little difficulties arising from visiting strangers often only afford amusement. My brother's sensitiveness and repugnance to meeting with strangers were so great, that he only attempted this duty with the utmost reluctance, impelled by a conscientiousness which was only stronger than his aversion from the task. While the narrative of his first attempt may be amusing, it may serve to encourage some young ministers, who similarly shrink from the work, to persevere in spite of failure at the beginning. Furnished with the address of some member who needed a little pastoral care, he went to the house, knocked at the door, and was called to come in. He opened the door, and found a woman busily engaged in washing, to whom he announced himself as the young minister of Hillgate Chapel, and that he had come to see her. "Oh!" was the response, while she went on with her work. He made another remark or two of a general character to which only the shortest and gruffest replies were made, and then followed a dead silence,

neither apparently knowing what to say. His confusion grew intolerable, and blurting out some sentence or other to the effect that he had better be going as she was busy, to which she replied "Varra well," he took his departure, feeling ashamed and mortified at the miserable exhibition he had made of his incapacity for pastoral visitation; and resolved not speedily to attempt it again. Yet conscience prevailed over his timidity and bashfulness, and meeting elsewhere with a kindlier reception than attended his first effort, he was emboldened to fulfil his disagreeable duty. While at Stockport he made the acquaintance of the lady who afterwards became his wife, and being engaged thus early in his probation, he was not the object of such attentions in other circuits as often seriously interfere with a young minister's time and studies.

At the Conference of 1862, he was appointed to Clitheroe. The beauty of the scenery of this country circuit charmed him, but the long walks occasionally were too much for him, and he sometimes complained of what afterwards proved his special trouble, attacks of dyspepsia. Yet here too he was both popular and successful, though he felt it his duty to leave at the end of the year, that he might have more time for the reading which he felt so necessary.

His next appointment was Haslingden where he remained for three years. The congregation in the town was very much larger than he had been accustomed to, and the demand for sermons more frequent. But he nerved himself for his work, and after a time was privileged to see a goodly measure of success. Writing under date 16th February, 1864, he says:—

"I was down about all sorts of things last week. . . . . On Sunday, however, there was a bit of a brightening both times, and at night especially when I had a specially good time, the best since I came. Afterwards the communion rail was filled with seekers, and five professed to find peace."

Again in a letter dated 29th February, 1864, he writes:—"Yesterday was a very good day here. I enjoyed both services very much, and at night about a dozen persons professed to find peace. I feel better satisfied with these marks of Divine approval than any praise of men."

The writer remembers him making the statement that

he could count up 120 persons who had professed to find peace with God as the result of his ministry in the Haslingden circuit.

In September 1865 he had his first trip to the English Lake district. He was charmed with its rare beauties, and returned invigorated in mind and body. Henceforth it became his favourite holiday ground, and though he visited Scotland and North Wales, he gave the palm for combination of the wild, the beautiful, and the interesting, to the scenery of the English Lakes.

The strain of continual preparation for Haslingden pulpit told upon his constitution. The late Rev. Henry Castle was his superintendent, and was exceedingly considerate in appointing him his work, and helping him to a few days of rest when he needed it.

He was greatly encouraged by testimonies to the good which he was made instrumental in accomplishing, and by assiduous attention to pastoral visitation found the duty become more easy, though it was still performed for conscience' sake rather than from inclination.

Grateful testimonies to his faithfulness in this duty were borne at the Quarterly Meeting.

Fortunately his health held out, and at the ensuing Conference he was ordained to the work of the ministry. The week of the ordination he spoke of as the most weightily solemn one in his life. The Rev. W. Arthur, the President that year, put the responsibility of the ministry in so strong a light before the young men, that my brother felt as if he hardly dared to proceed any farther. But the renewed consecration of himself then made was sincere and thorough, and from the obligations his work imposed, he thenceforward never drew back.

CHAPTER III.

MANCHESTER. 1866 TO 1868.

At the Conference of 1866 he was appointed to the Manchester (Grosvenor Street) circuit, as Home Missionary. After Conference he was united in marriage to Miss Hollingdrake, of Stockport, went on a trip to the English Lake District, and at the usual time entered upon his new duties in Manchester.

Most likely he would have considered himself, at any rate at the beginning of his probation, of all men most unsuitable for such an appointment as this, but the hand of God was visible in it. The discipline of such service however repugnant to his natural feelings, prepared him for greater efficiency in the full work of a Christian minister than otherwise he would have attained. In after years "his profiting appeared unto all."

His district was a very wide one. He had the schools at Chancery Lane and Bank Meadow as his head-quarters. He at once set himself to visit the members of the societies under his care, secure rooms for cottage services, and make a beginning in purely aggressive work. His journal abounds in deeply interesting accounts of cases met with in his rounds, and elicited from time to time the marked commendation of the Rev. W. W. Stamp, and the General Secretary of the Home Missions, the Rev. Charles Prest.

A few extracts will suffice to show the spirit in which he laboured, and the character of the work he did.

"October 10th, 1866.—Went over to New Islington yesterday, and got one of the leaders there to go out with me in the evening to call upon the members. We had to go into some sadly dirty neighbourhoods to find them, and

managed to see or call upon some sixteen different families who all received us with great respect. I don't much wonder at a low state of morality and religious experience generally prevailing in such a neighbourhood. The atmosphere itself in some of the houses would be sufficient to induce spiritual dyspepsia in less than a week. The houses are small, the streets small, and where I was last night several of them unpaved, with middens and ashpits lying about in any waste place for the dogs to play on first, and then the children. If public houses and spirit vaults can have any ground for expecting custom anywhere, a locality like this must be the very place to give it them.

October 18th.—Came across a man who said he had not been anywhere to worship for thirty years. Didn't seem to think he was much worse than other people. Cloaked himself up in Pharisaism, and said plainly they weren't over bad in his house. Like the men in Bunyan, he bore the shield called "Hope of doing well at last," and wasn't ashamed of it.

October 20th.—Made thirty visits this week altogether. The usual complaints of family cares, drunken husbands, &c. Visited one widow who had been housekeeper in noblemen's families. She now is in one of the miserable streets near the railway arches, keeping a little shop. I thought as I saw her there in that low neighbourhood with no more of the blue sky to look at than that narrow street and that murky atmosphere will afford, health broken, and nothing hardly remaining of prosperity but its memories, her career was as strange and sensational as any novel. Found a man too who used to meet with us for twenty years, but has gone no where in particular now for eight or ten years. I invited that backslider home again. One thing I see, it needs the greatest tact to deal with these people successfully.

November 8th.—The apathy of the people in some neighbourhoods struck me as remarkable last night. Two young men who help in these cottage services told me they spent about half an hour the other week in inviting the people in, and got nobody after all to the meeting. A similar experience this to mine the other night at Meadow Street.

November 10th.—Interjected among my visiting of

members a bit of aggressive work. Happened to be crossing a miserable looking open space, behind some houses when it occurred to me I might as well give those houses a tract each and finish my other work after. I did so, and found wretchedness to any extent almost. The last house made me most satisfied with turning aside. There was a man lying there, as they thought, slowly bleeding to death. His wife was almost beside herself, and entreated me to go upstairs to see him. Of course, I went, and spoke as to one in desperate emergency, but these repentances in sight of death gained no credit with me from this case. The woman had been years ago a singer at Gravel Lane Chapel, a scholar in our schools; the old story, sad enough in all conscience. I was very near being sick with one thing or another, and came away unhinged for any more visiting that day. Islington visitations generally remind me of the good old saying that "Cleanliness is next to Godliness."

November 15th.—Found a backslider in the course of my visiting. This case showed me plainly what a kind of brazen hardness comes over one who once knew and felt the truth, if he falls away. The way this woman talked about the past and hell was something to stick in one's memory.

21st.—In another house was a socialist, or something of the kind, whose wife lay ill in bed, a christian. I had an interesting conversation with him by the side of the wretched sputtering fire, and on proposing prayer he knelt down, and clasped me warmly by the hand on leaving. What blew up his nothingarian notions, at least for the time, I suspect to have been the tale his wife had been telling about a manager of some neighbouring works, who had died in two hours, exclaiming often, "Oh, if I could but be saved." "

In my brother's review of the quarter he speaks with satisfaction of the tokens of Divine power in the congregations, and of several conversions which had gladdened the hearts of himself and his coadjutors. The process by which the once timid, shrinking, reserved man was being changed into the courageous, patient, plodding Home Missionary, had fairly begun, and that the work was done for love of Christ and of souls, rather than from delight in

the work itself, only shows what can be accomplished by the most unlikely labourers when they yield themselves unreservedly to the call of duty, and the constraining influence of the love of God.

"January 7th, 1867.—I saw yet more clearly how sensitive people are on the subject of dress. It seems as if decently dressed people must almost be excluded from any place of worship that expects to gather in many of the poor. If they come once, they huddle into a corner so as not to be seen, and often don't come again, very much I do believe from the operation of this dress principle in their minds. "They've nothing on but this shawl," as a woman said to me last night, who sat shrinkingly in a corner as if half ashamed of herself for being there.

8th.—Another interesting case was one of the women who were in the vestry on Sunday night. She is in great poverty through keeping a little shop, and is sorely pressed to open her shop on Sundays in order to eke out the rent, and get something to eat. A specimen of her mode of life is seen in this, that in ten weeks she has had one pound of butter, and as for bread, a two-pound loaf she has made last a week. So she said, and I couldn't help feeling as she said it, that what the Catechism says is true, "that some sins are more heinous in the sight of God than others." No doubt there are many more who from the pressure of deadly want do on the Sabbath things that God in his compassion will judge more mercifully than some of his servants think. I told her what the right thing was, and left her, not unrelieved.

11th.—In the course of my journeyings saw some most wretched dens of alleys which are a crying shame to Manchester. People living where the door opens on a midden for the rest of the alley; within three feet of a general ashpit as they sit by the fire!

25th.—Visited yesterday the other half of the street I began on Monday and Tuesday, and out of thirty-four houses, I found seven families where the parents professed to be pretty generally frequenters of some place of worship. All the rest neglected, some making no disguise of it.

26.—Special service at Bank Meadow. One apparently clear case of conversion. Meeting again to-night.

Three young men said they had found peace. Altogether fourteen persons profess to have found peace with God during the week.

31st.—Struck yesterday with the fact that a low state of trade in a neighbourhood will be sure to cause many absentees from class, say what you like in explanation of our system of contribution. Several of my members are absent now from this reason, and this only. They can't dress or do as they used, and so cannot or don't come.

15th February.—Called yesterday just in time to relieve what seemed to be great destitution. There was nothing in the house to eat. Fever had beaten down the only son who brought his mother anything. She had no money, and did not know where to get any. Of course, I helped her, there and then. . . . She was famished, plainly, and a widow. I didn't need to ask if she had been to any place of worship lately, for her clothes were none of the best, and I expect every available rag had been parted with to get something to eat. It looked like "chance" that I called just then, but I suspect the chance was of the highest and best kind. . . . Baptized the child of two poor travelling hawkers afterwards, and came home not sorry that in my way I had gone to seek the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.

21st.—To-day visiting as usual. I learnt that the very poor woman mentioned (15th) above used to be in society with us. What an old sad story this is. Marriage, very often leading to carelessness; then cares, then losses of health or wealth; then poverty of greater or less severity with its accompaniments of dirty homes, tattered garments, and neglect of the house of God—and—memories—easily touched when one calls on them as I do now. A sad and very frequently told tale about here!

20th March.—Visited a little street near the railway. Only three or four went anywhere on Sundays, and some of them I could not but feel had much to tempt them away from the sanctuary. Really men work like brutes in some parts of Manchester, at it morning, noon, and night. What can you expect when such a machine stops working at the week end, but that it will stand still as other machines do till you wind it up again on Monday.

29th.—Forcibly reminded yesterday that one bad step

leads to another, and you never know where it will end, by the story a woman told me of herself. The circumstances are simple enough. Used to be a member and also a singer. Took offence at something said about the singing, left class, left chapel, left everything, and now acknowledges the error, but finds it very difficult to retrace the steps. Things like this are constantly occurring. . . . I find I have paid 454 visits during the quarter, 42 of which were to sick persons. Most of them, perhaps two-thirds of the whole, have been from house to house, and generally connected with the giving of tracts, but they do not all mean an actual entering into a house, for that, in taking a street, I find not always feasible, but they do mean with but few exceptions, the dropping of some words about religion, and truth, and God."

During this summer my brother commenced preaching in the open air. At first he shrank from this service, but after a time he came to enjoy it. Moreover, he saw how powerful an engine for good it might be made. Nor did he cease to employ it in his subsequent circuits while he had health and strength for the task. A few extracts on the subject from his journal will suffice.

"20th June, 1867.—Held an open air service last night near one of our cottages which was very satisfactory. Plenty of stragglers stood and listened, and I felt that to be engaged in such work was no mean service. We made but poor show in singing, but didn't mind that when we saw how the people gathered round. There's much of Nicodemus' spirit about this quarter, for there are always more as it gets duskier.

1st October.—Every now and then we find in a casual way somebody or other who has profited by our open air work, and is sorry it is discontinued. It is not so easy to tabulate the results of that kind of work, but I am convinced our labours in that way this summer have not been in vain.

11th July, 1868.—Held out of door service at night, and had a good number of people to listen, a considerable number of working men being amongst them. One or two of these tried to annoy us, but could only succeed in showing their foolishness. They were egged on by some men who stood by a neighbouring beerhouse, who were

evidently daring them to come and upset us. Instead of doing us harm, it seemed to do us good, and it was pretty plain that Satan had overshot himself in it. I had great voice given me, and power to declare the truth without fear, so what seemed for our hindrance turned out for our furtherance. I almost wish the devil would stir up a little opposition to us. It would certainly be a benefit to the work."

As the Conference of 1868 approached, my brother determined to remove. Constant contact with dirt, disease and destitution did not tend to establish his health, and the warning of several slight attacks of sickness induced him to leave what in a spiritual sense had been a most profitable sphere of labour. But the experience obtained was of the greatest service to him in subsequent years. He used to say, that so far as time and opportunity would allow, the kind of work done by a Home Missionary, should be attempted by every circuit minister, and he faithfully endeavoured to carry out this opinion in his own practice.

The Rev. T. M. Albrighton was a colleague of my brother in this circuit, and in a recent letter writes:—

"It was my privilege to be associated with your now sainted brother in the Grosvenor Street Circuit, Manchester, and although he laboured there as a Home Missionary amid many discouragements, I had a great regard for him as an earnest Christian, and a high admiration of him as an able minister of our Lord Jesus Christ. There was always a beautiful simplicity in his character and conversation which charmed me. He tried to cultivate an acquaintance with almost every subject, and his knowledge was versatile and comprehensive. His sermons often displayed great beauty and variety of thought and diction, and were frequently attended with much spiritual power. I marked his growing popularity and usefulness with great joy, and have mourned for him as for a sincere and loving friend. If he had been spared, I believe he would have been in the foremost rank of attractive and successful preachers of the gospel."

CHAPTER IV.

RAWTENSTALL AND SUNDERLAND. 1868-1873.

His next appointment was to Rawtenstall. Here he diligently devoted himself to preparation for the pulpit, while he was most exemplary in his attention to pastoral visitation. Here too he entered into the enjoyment of the blessing of entire sanctification. The reading of Coley's "Life of Collins" was a great stimulus to seeking and help in gaining this desirable experience. He thus refers to it in a letter to the writer:—

16th June, 1869.—"I think I've found the true secret of preaching with power, which is to get and keep what Collins had, and then to preach having faith not in sentences but Christ. After this blessing I have been aiming with various success for the last five weeks about, and do not doubt but I have it now, and I never had more power in preaching or a more satisfactory peace."

His enjoyment of this high state of grace was not without interruption, but though he spoke but little about it, he aimed at living in perfect love to God to the end of his life. During the summer months he availed himself of opportunities of preaching in the open air, sometimes as often as three times a week. He did not confine himself to the number of services appointed on the plan, but sought to do good whenever and wherever he could.

He remained in this circuit for two years only, seeking a change of his own accord, to the regret of the people throughout the circuit. At the Conference of 1870, he was appointed to Sunderland (Fawcett Street) and entered upon a sphere of labour in every way congenial

to his tastes and feelings. The tax upon his powers by preparation for the pulpit was considerable, but the claims of his congregations, especially that at Fawcett Street, were felt to be sufficient to demand his best efforts, and the appreciation, ungrudgingly expressed, was a powerful stimulus to exertion. Owing to the breakdown in health of his superintendent, the Rev. E. Jones, he had the care of the circuit during the greater part of his first year in it, and gained the admiration of the friends by the tact and administrative skill which he displayed in its management. His services in the pulpit and on the platform now came more widely into request. As deputation for Home Missionary Meetings, he was twice sent forth by the Conference; he also assisted neighbouring circuits without unduly neglecting his own. In January, 1871, a great sorrow cast its shadow upon his home. His children were attacked by scarlet fever, and he himself was slightly affected by it, but a week or two saw him able to take his usual work again. His eldest child and only son was seized with dropsy after the fever left him, and on the 1st of February passed away from earth. A marked precocity was apparent in the little fellow, and the parents' hearts were correspondingly wrung with grief. In this trial my brother's christian submission was constantly shown, but for a long time afterwards he could scarcely bear without tears any reference to the sad event.

The Rev. Thomas Rippon was associated with my brother in this circuit as Mr. Jones' supply, and formed for him a strong and enduring friendship. Giving his impressions of my brother at this period of his ministry he thus writes: "His conscientiousness and fidelity were remarkable. How carefully he attended to every department of his office, often at the risk of his health, which was then but poor, and certainly of comfort and quiet of mind. He spared not himself. After a morning's severe study, which pulled him down physically, immediately after dinner he would start on his pastoral rounds, chiefly among the poor, dropping in upon some friend or at home for tea at 5.30, and then devoting the evening to some other work connected with his ministry. A Monday morning or Saturday afternoon was the only time I could get him out of harness, and then he would be the boy again—

for few men had more juvenile spirit—never however forgetting his calling, or saying or doing anything to bring it into contempt.

It was in Sunderland that he lost his Arthur, a lovely boy and one I held very dear. It was very affecting when we returned from the burial, and the youngest born was presented by J. H. for baptism, Mr. Vasey officiating. He was thoroughly broken down, and wept like a child. He had a woman's heart. How susceptible he was to any affront, a cross look or word, or coarseness. And there shone so brightly and clearly his *sympathy*. As a friend he was true as steel, and how often have I said to mutual friends of his—when living, as now when dead—that I could have trusted my life in his hands, and reposed it there with a feeling of luxury, and of perfect trust. He was a man to send for and speak to, when in trouble. Wise men respected him, and good men saw in him a high ideal to aim after.

Many know what he was as a Preacher. To my mind he was always the poet-preacher. His sermons had always about them the realness and naturalness which characterize true poetry. There was about them the dash of waterfalls, the breezes of sea and mountain top, and rare landscapes, which brought his hearers into contact with healthy influences, and make them sympathetic with him in the great lessons he designed to teach or enforce.

Two of his lectures, "Luther" and "Paul," I regard as gems of composition, which, when he had health to give them, went well. How often I have heard him say, "Rippon, I believe I could do a good stroke of business for God and Humanity if I had only strength; but I lack strength, and therefore must be content to work quietly, doing my best." And his sermons were faithful. Few in our ministry in these times address the conscience and rebuke hollowness, cant and shams as he did. His standard of morality was the highest, and he was always himself working towards it, and calling upon his people to aim at it likewise.

And did you ever hear a man pray as he did? I never did. How natural and simple he was in addressing the Great Supreme! What freshness there was about his supplications, and how close he brought men into contact

with God thereby. And the secret of it all was, he enjoyed and had constant communion with heaven.

Spending our holidays in Scotland once, I remember we passed a night at a farm-house Inn by the shore of Loch Tay. Before retiring for the night he left the room saying "I am just going out for a quiet talk with God," and following him, awhile after, I saw him in the distance, in the midsummer night's gloaming, walking by the dark water, and heard him in devout tones pray to God. That much impressed me.

If there was another thing he impressed me with, it was his reverence for the scriptures. He believed his Bible to be the "Word of God." He interested himself in everything relating to his church and people, and faithfully did his work down to the most minute detail."

A few extracts from his diary will give additional interest to this portion of my brother's career.

"31st July, 1872.—Had a very good time here on Sunday night, and two souls seemed caught in the net. Both professed to find Christ.

10th August.—Began meeting classes this week. How difficult it is to do that work well.

9th September.—I felt yesterday the increased physical vis that this out has given me, but how far below the highest style of preaching I seem to come yet.

October 14.—Went up to Mr. ————'s to tea, and had just time to hurry away to chapel. Congregation materially thinned by Dr. Rigg's being at Sans Street, I had a miserable time almost throughout. Voice dulled with cold—no liberty in prayer—hardness in preaching—bungling among the notes—unimpressive reading of the scriptures—a generally evil time. I have not had so poor a time at Fawcett Street for a long time, and I will eschew going out to tea in future on a Sunday night as much as possible."

It does not always follow that when a preacher has a poor time himself that his congregation has one too. This service was an instance in point. The next entry records: "I heard of one instance of signal good resulting from last Sunday night's service, so the time was not quite lost."

After this date there are many references to the diffi-

culty he found in choosing subjects for the pulpit, and elaborating them when chosen. The real cause was lack of physical strength, which during his last year at Sunderland made itself painfully apparent. Little did his congregations, when enjoying his ministrations know at what a cost of loss of vitality they were prepared. The stimulus of Fawcett Street congregation often made him forget his weakness, but at the other places in the circuit he frequently had poor and dull services, for which he sometimes reproached himself unnecessarily. He wished to benefit them as much as the larger congregation, but did not feel equal pleasure or ability in the attempt to do so.

"Saturday, 9th November.—It has been hard work this week making a sermon, and has given me a headache. If there be some other way of preparing for the pulpit that is not so exhausting as mine, I should be glad to find it out.

10th November.—Have come from T——— a little while ago, having had a miserable time there from beginning to end. A cold morning, a cold chapel, a small attendance, a great number of children crowding and buzzing round the pulpit, and a wretched coldness freezing my own spirit. I don't think I ought to feel like that at ——— or any other place. If I had a truer sense of the work of a christian teacher, surely I should be able to master this feeling that so often attacks me when up there. It seems not right that a small company should leave me in a state of semi-starvation, and that I should need a large congregation in order to be properly awake and in earnest. Yet I don't go up there intending to be cold. It rather comes over me as a temptation that owing to my want of faith I am not able to resist. Not satisfactory."

There is nothing however, either surprising or reprehensible in such an experience. The wonder would have been, if with such circumstances as are described, and the enfeebled health complained of on the Saturday evening, one so finely sensitive to the influence of his surroundings as my brother was, could have felt differently. But it showed how jealously he watched over himself, and how faithfully he strove to do his work. He never was satisfied with merely getting through a service. Yet often when most depressed himself he was made the instrument

of good to others. Inheriting a tendency to morbid self introspection, he was frequently disposed to find fault with himself in his spirit, mode of working and preaching, and lessening physical strength increased his difficulty in overcoming such feelings.

"Sunday, 15th Dec.—Most of last week I was out of order physically somehow, and then I was much disturbed and perplexed about my style of preaching. I feared it was not right or good. Something of that kind I have had before that had a paralyzing effect upon my sermonizing. It had this week. I felt as if fancy or illustration were not right, and my writing a superfluous trouble.

2nd January, 1873.—A prisoner in the house to day owing to an affection of the throat and correspondingly in difficulties about Sunday night.

11th.—Did not preach at all last Sunday owing to weakness. Went on Tuesday to Northallerton, and returned yesterday somewhat improved in consequence. I have felt much feebleness this week, making me look with some wonder on the question of how to get through this year."

Recovering, he was gladdened by visible proofs of the Divine blessing on his preaching in conversions, and there are numerous entries in his diary which show how again and again he heard of good resulting from his labours of which he did not at the time know. With better health there came more enjoyment of his work. For example:

"9th February.—This morning I had a remarkable facility of utterance, command of voice and gesture, access in prayer, and generally a good time. How much of this is due to bodily conditions, I wonder? The sermon has more illustrations than some. I saw they told.

18th February.—Not without tokens of good lately accruing from my ministry. Heard of one or two on Sunday. Very good time here in the evening and large congregation. Again no visible good in the shape of conversions, but I will not therefore believe that nothing of that kind took place. Indeed I only heard casually yesterday of a case of special quickening in consequence. Made the sermon last week with greater ease than I have often experienced. Stuffed it as full of "likes" as I could. They told.

17th March, 1873.—Here at night a large congregation, but I did not get on very well somehow either in prayer, reading, or preaching. Someone fainted just as I was beginning to preach, which had an unpleasant effect. Then it seemed to me the sermon wanted grip. I half fancy that a more vigorous health would remedy a great many of these seeming and perhaps real weaknesses.

1st April.—All last week the sermon making dragged. The brain seemed worn out nearly. Got it done, nevertheless.

12th.—Physical weakness has greatly pressed upon me lately. I dare say that in comparison with Haslingden times, I can do more now than I could then, but I often get plain reminders that "we have this treasure in earthen vessels." I often think if only that one thing were removed how much more good work I should be able to do in the world."

12th May.—At night had a wonderfully good time. I spent some time beforehand in special prayer, and if ever prayer had answer mine had. I shall follow a similar course another time. There can be no doubt that power with men springs from power with God at first."

This resolution was faithfully kept, and there are numerous references in his journal to the benefit derived from it.

Reference has already been made to my brother's natural tendency to inordinate bashfulness. With lessening physical strength this discomfort became very frequent. It assaulted him in the pulpit, harassed him in prayer, annoyed him in the streets, hampered him in pastoral visitation, and was verily a thorn in the flesh, the agony of which only anyone similarly affected will be able rightly to estimate. He seldom, if ever, made reference to it in conversation even with his dearest friends, but it immensly added to the burden of anxiety which often weighed upon him before his public work began. No one but himself and God knew how hard a trial it was for him sometimes to stand up before his congregations, or how utterly miserable he felt when going through his work. It led in some cases to a reserve which people mistook for pride, and an abruptness that often was in danger of being set down for incivility or discourteousness. However pain-

ful to enlarge on such a topic, it appears only just to his memory that the fact should be stated, while it becomes the more wonderful that with so serious a drawback he attained such eminence as a public speaker. From the entries in his diary it is remarkable that whenever his health improved his suffering from this distressing sensation nearly or altogether passed away. For instance, after a short visit to Scotland he writes:

"23rd June, 1873—Yesterday had good times morning and evening, but especially in the evening, when strange to say I was perfectly or almost perfectly free from the distressing feeling which has bothered me lately. I don't know how much a week of fresh air may have had to do with this."

But the respite was very brief, for on the 13th July he writes: "That most distressing feeling of shyness so oppressed me during a good part of the service that I felt I could with difficulty look the people in the face. Strange that a thing from which I rarely or never suffered in this pulpit for two years and a half should mount to such a head during the last six months of my being here, and not the least this last Sabbath morning I shall have at Fawcett Street. I wonder whether the devil has been let loose upon me for a time, and suffered to vex and aggravate a weak side of my nature or what. I have lain down this afternoon reading over my diary since I came to Sunderland. What a host of poor times in preaching physical weakness seems to have caused."

At length the period of his ministry in Sunderland came to an end. At the Quarterly Meeting in June very warm and grateful testimonies were borne to the high estimation in which he and his work were held. His entry is—

"June 25th.—The vote of thanks they gave me was almost more than I could face in replying. It was pleasant to hear the terms in which they spoke of my ministry among them. I don't think it has been all in vain."

Amidst universal regret and esteem he closed his official connection with the circuit, not without substantial tokens of regard from the loving people he had so faithfully and efficiently endeavoured to serve. After a brief holiday, which was greatly needed, he entered upon his next sphere of labour to which he had been looking forward with mingled fear and hope.

CHAPTER V.

YORK. 1873—1876.

By the Conference of 1873 my brother was appointed to York (New Street) to which he had been previously invited. He was in hopes that the country air and drives would greatly help to build up his health, which was sensibly impaired by his last half year in Sunderland, but for a long time there was little sign of improvement. Moreover his constitutional infirmity continually beset him, and the references to the trouble caused by it are distressingly frequent. On his country Sundays he usually had to preach three times, and returned home thoroughly wearied. The climate of York he felt to be too relaxing, and the flatness of the surrounding country often had a depressing effect upon his spirits. Yet he liked the city itself with its quaint old streets and buildings, its relics of past centuries, and above all its gorgeous Minster. He enjoyed a boating expedition on the river, though it was seldom he allowed himself time to indulge in that healthful exercise, and the beauties of the country at all seasons of the year did not escape his observant notice. But he specially appreciated the opportunity, and felt the responsibility of preaching to great numbers at one time which his city congregations, particularly that at Centenary Chapel, afforded him, and whatever strength he had was sure to be called forth by the stimulus of the sight of such large assemblies.

It is, however, the conviction of many of his friends that the tax upon his vital powers, which were low to begin with, was far too severe, and that had he laboured during the three years spent in York in some less arduous sphere,

his valuable life might have been prolonged. The spirit in which he did his work was unchanged, but weakness of the body often fettered his zeal, and prevented its public manifestation. We quote again from his diary which after all gives us the truest insight into his own feelings about his work, and the difficulties amid which it was conducted.

"5th November, 1873.—Yesterday at Huntington where again my want of strength made itself painfully felt. Walked both ways and was very much exhausted when I got home at night. I am afraid I never shall have physical strength enough to enable me to do what I would. I feel I have something to say, but I often lack force to say it with.

8th.—Met classes on Thursday night, where had two distinct testimonies to blessings gained in connection with my sermons "Pearl of great price," and "Bread of Life," and was proportionately encouraged.

9th.—I had a very uncomfortable time at New Street this morning owing mainly to what has often troubled me of late. I almost think I grow in that respect worse and worse. Nervous apprehension was carried so far as to greatly trouble me, and spoilt the entire service to me. Somehow I couldn't get on in prayer, and in reading was not master of myself, and never once got free from trammels during the sermon. Surely I have a thorn in the flesh.

Friday 14th.—I am compelled to add that the service on Sunday morning from several quarters seems to have been productive of good. While I was in such miserable condition, the people were greatly enjoying themselves.

1st. November.—Two or three testimonies from various quarters to my having been useful to some of them. One sick man professed to trust in Jesus this evening while I was with him.

Tuesday, Dec. 23rd.—We hear this morning that E—. is not coming till to-morrow, owing to her having had a cold last week. How ready my mind is to imagine all manner of evil possibilities. What a curse it would be to be left the prey of a morbid imagination. A strong faith is evidently the thing to combat this evil. I have been reading Thomas Jackson's autobiography. It makes me feel ashamed of the little I have done, but I remember he

had a vigorous constitution, and I have not, and never shall have now. I doubt if it be a reasonable thing to expect my health to be much better than it is, at any time. If I were twelve years younger, it might be, but I can hardly look forward now to any considerable advance in bodily vigour, yet that is what I want as regards temporal qualifications for success in the ministry.

3rd February.—On Sunday I had two first-class times here. That sermon on "Gehazi" went strongly at New Street in the morning, and "Follow thou Me" went well at Centenary. Apprehensions troubled me as usual respecting morning service, but they all vanished as the time came, and I very much enjoyed the service. The congregation was large. The company at night was splendid, and I was mightly helped, first in prayer and then in preaching. I think these two times may be counted as among the best I have had in this circuit. Contrary to my expectation I had plenty of voice for the night service, and shouted amain. To Him from whom all power comes be the glory!

15th.—Just come from Centenary where have had an evil time from beginning to end, one of the worst I have had there from the beginning. I dare say it has been largely owing to this abnormal and unreasonable self-consciousness that I can't get away from, nor forget, do what I will. What things it prompts me to, to conceal or ward off the coming confusion. I had no liberty in prayer, no ease of voice, no command of thought or language, and seemed powerless. Indeed, after about half an hour some of them appeared to be weary of the whole affair. Oh! what a fall to my ambition to be a powerful speaker.

Tuesday 17th.—On Sunday night . . . . it was as contrary to the morning's experience as summer is to winter. . . . I heard that the morning's service had been good to some. It is well the bread of life is distributed, though the disciples' hands tremble in doing it sometimes.

Thursday.—I have repeatedly had since Sunday testimony to the blessing that accompanied last Sunday morning's service. It has been the theme of more than ordinary mention. Our little child has not been very well. It makes a difference I can find when it is so. How the bitter hangs by the sweet in human life."

Thus again and again after times of unusual mental

depression which caused my brother much suffering, and which were doubtless owing mainly to enfeebled health, did God mercifully encourage His servant by allowing him to hear testimonies to good received even when he thought himself least effective. So in reference to the last noted occasion he writes:—

"21st February.—To-day I have had two very special and gratifying testimonies to the power accompanying last Sunday morning's sermon. From henceforth I ought to beware how I give place to the Devil in believing that any sermon preached with an honest aim to do good has failed."

It is often easier to tell what is wrong with other people, than to discern it in oneself. Domestic anxieties caused by slight attacks of sickness on some of the members of my brother's household often sorely chafed his spirit. and made him feel literally miserable. Doubtless he would in any one else have attributed such nervous irritability to its true cause, nervous exhaustion, but though occasionally he thought it might spring from this, he often blames his want of faith. Really he could no more help nervous apprehension and foreboding than a sick man can help having a headache sometimes, but his self-condemnation was frequently excessive, and had it not been so painful to him, one could not help in reading his journal smiling at the way small ailments gave rise to really great trouble and discomfort. No really healthy man could have felt as he did. His youngest child being threatened with hooping cough, the following morbid entry occurs:—

"March 8th, 1874:—I find it hard to believe that all is well. How easily one might turn cynic over the sorrows and sufferings of human life. What a painful, almost mocking contrast there is between the fair world under the sunshine of this fine spring weather and human life! Yet I don't know that I deserve to have any easier lot than anybody else, and some have a much harder time of it than I have. Look at Mrs.——— and her family. . . I preach to others about "Waiting upon the Lord," but I do not get the comfort and renewal of strength from that communion that I ought. What a mass of contradictions is in my nature."

Such revelations as these are not pleasant, but if any

fair notion is to be entertained of the difficulty under which my brother's work was prosecuted, fidelity to truth requires them. When the body flags, brain power flags, so after an exhausting week there is the amusing entry.

"20th April.—And now I have about three weeks in which to make two new sermons for Sunderland, and I feel as if I had said all I have to say on any or every text in the Bible.

9th May.—E.——— came home on Thursday along with F.———. If faith had only been stronger, all anxiety on her account might, as the issue shows, have been avoided. I learn these great spiritual lessons very slowly. In some things I am spiritually stronger than I was, but in others, as for instance, this item of 'Care,' and leaving it all with God, I am wofully deficient."

One more record of the painful straits in which his constitutional infirmity sometimes placed him, and the painful subject must drop.

"24th May 1874.—Returned a while ago from New Street, where had a very bad time altogether. That wretched enemy from which I have suffered so much seemed to be let loose upon me to start with, and I actually sat down after giving out only two verses of six lines eights for the first singing. I think I have scarcely ever been *so* put to it before. I never quite got rid of it all the time. The sermon was short, but delivered with a weight that makes one almost laugh to think that I have ever imagined it possible I might succeed as a preacher. I felt as if an appeal were not possible, and closed the sermon hardly able to look the people in the face. It seems strange that anyone with such infirmities should have been selected for public life. Many an abruptness and eccentricity in my pulpit and other public work that has been laid to the charge of oddity and queerness of disposition has really been the result of this infirmity—the painful wriggle of the worm upon the hook of the fisher more than anything else."

If any reader, has at any time come into contact with my brother, and been struck by any peculiarity of manner, this may be the solution of the difficulty how to account for it. He prayed often and earnestly for the thorn to be removed, but as he laments in his journal without success.

It was of physical origin, and part of the discipline through which he had to pass, ere like the Master he served he was "made perfect through suffering." Of course, there were every now and then services of great peace and power, or he could not have borne up under the load, for instance—

"3rd January, 1875.—A new experience in New Street. I was so moved and melted down as soon as I began to pray that I was obliged to stop, and could hardly get on anyhow. A capital time in preaching an augury I hope for the year. I give thanks and praise to God, and resolve to devote myself to Him afresh.

19th January.—Last night I was at Centenary again, and we apparently managed to catch some fish. Nine or ten persons came down into the vestry after the service as seekers, of whom five, I think, professed to obtain a sense of pardon. I need not say I am greatly encouraged and stimulated.

15th February.—Last night I went to New Street under great oppression of mind, and some fatigue of body which gradually disappeared, and I had a rare good time in the sermon, speaking I know "not with word only."

28th March, 1876.—Sunday was a good day . . Towards the close the argument took fire, and I had a powerful time, feeling once more 'the luxury of preaching.' In the evening a splendid company at Centenary. In the after meeting six persons came forward as penitents, five of whom professed to get good. That was best of all, and a good finish to a good day. In the morning before the fray began I had audience of the King, and seemed almost literally—certainly my spirit heard—to hear the words; 'Have not I sent thee?' In that strength I, and yet not I, conquered.

April 23rd.—It has been a good day. I was greatly helped in my approach to God before the time, and in that comfort have got through the day."

In the spring appeared the first symptoms of the malady which developed at length into the disease which proved fatal to my brother. His voice and throat were affected so that on one Sunday in March he was unable to take his work. The relaxation passed away after a time, but references to his failure in voice power became frequent

in his journal, and on August 5th, 1876, he writes:—"My voice is never very clear now for long together, wants frequent coughing to remove phlegm." Yet he apprehended no permanent disability from this source when he removed from York.

He left the circuit with sincere regret, though the work had been so hard to get through. His last words concerning it are—

"25th August, 1876.—I am thankful to meet with so many unmistakeable proofs that my ministry here has not been in vain.

27th August.—This is my last Sunday here as one of their ministers. A feeling of sadness comes with the thought that I cannot express. It has been no small thing to minister to such congregations as we have here, for three years. I fear I have not always looked at it in the right light. Large congregation this morning at Centenary, and I had a good time, on the edge of breaking down through press of feeling. I think it will be a long time before I come across such a congregation again. Many plain testimonies that my work has been greatly appreciated here, for which I am thankful. And now all is over. I cannot realize it. I don't know which of my circuit periods has seemed so short. I wonder what will come of this next leap. I do not venture to cherish any large hopes. I shall carry with me the same great weakness which will be a trial wherever I go; and yet I ought not to forget that in spite of it I have been helped through this circuit, and not without signs of good. So I will hope where the Psalmist did."

At this period of my brother's ministry a friend writes:—"The remembrance of his teaching, tenderness and pureness of heart is a fragrant memory in the hearts of many never to be lost."

The Rev. John Hugh Morgan writes:—

"I followed your beloved and gifted brother in York, where his name is 'as ointment poured forth.'"

The following from the Rev. Thomas Brackenbury may here be fitly inserted:—

"In the year 1866, the lamented John H. Anderson was my colleague in the Manchester (Grosvenor Street) circuit, then under the superintendence of the Rev. W. W. Stamp.

Our acquaintance soon ripened into mutual confidence and friendship. Patiently and prayerfully he pursued his work, amid some discouragement and with some success. He won the high regard of his judicious superintendent, and was beloved by the people among whom he laboured.

In 1873, we were appointed by the Conference to the York (New Street) Circuit. The Rev. W. M. Milnes and the Rev. W. G. Beardmore were also appointed in the same year. Although Mr. Anderson had then only travelled eleven years, he was the second minister in the circuit. All the four ministers were fresh on the ground, and were more nearly of an age than often happens. We entered at once into a brotherly bond of union, and our intercourse was of the happiest character. The preachers' weekly meeting was always a genial hour marked by cheerfulness and by devotion too. Some of Mr. Anderson's prayers on such occasions were unusually edifying, and showed that he was reverentlv familiar with the Hearer of prayer. He did not dissipate his influence, but gave his best energies to the work of God in the circuit.

His gifts as a preacher had become greatly matured. In the city pulpits he was not only acceptable, but popular; and not only popular, but useful. Intelligent Christians of many years' standing listened with delight to his edifying discourses; and, not unfrequently, awakened sinners, smitten under the word, came openly forward as seekers of forgiving mercy. The theme of his pulpit ministrations was decidedly evangelical. He was emphatically a minister of "the Word." He had enlightened and settled convictions, and therefore did not awaken religious doubts in the minds of his hearers, but confirmed them in the faith. His sermons were carefully prepared, and were always the fruit of recent thought. He was capable of rapid production, and this enabled him to find time for a somewhat extensive course of reading, the results of which enriched his ministry. Both in private conversation and public discourse, he indulged, frequently, in a series of interrogations. He searched beneath the surface, and brought out hidden meanings. To a lively imagination, he added a well furnished vocabulary, and hence his discourses abounded in freshness and beauty. Owing to physical weakness preaching was to him an exhausting toil. He could not be

boisterous, but there was a quiet power which, somehow, made deep impression upon his congregations.

As a pastor he was conscientious and painstaking. He had literary tastes, and a constitutional love of retirement; but he cheerfully practised self-denial, and devoted precious hours every week to the work of visiting the negligent, the suffering and the poor. In this respect he set a worthy example to those who would excuse themselves on the ground of uncongenial tastes and tendencies.

His care for the work of Methodism in the villages was practically manifested. No place was neglected because it was small or distant. "Give me some good long rides," he would say, when he knew the circuit plan was being arranged. The hours before the week-day evening services were diligently utilized for the purpose of visitation, and in many a village home he will long be remembered.

During the latter part of his term in York his physical debility somewhat increased, but a few days' change appeared to rally him, and he would return with new cheerfulness and vigour to the work he loved.

Gifts and graces he possessed in more than common measure. Pure in purpose, high in aim, gentle in disposition, patient under trial, candid almost to abruptness, willing always to oblige, richly imbued with the spirit of Jesus, he loved, and was beloved. He formed many warm friendships, and they will be renewed in a happier clime."

CHAPTER VI.

HALIFAX. 1876—1878.

My brother's next appointment was Halifax, (South Parade) circuit, to which he came by invitation. He entered upon his work hopefully. The beauty of the surrounding country he greatly appreciated, and felt to be a pleasant contrast to the flatness and tameness of York. But from the beginning his vocal organs gave him anxiety, and he gives utterance to his fears of a complete break-down in that direction. For instance:—

"7th January, 1877.—This unpleasant condition of the throat throws a great gloom over me. I see an ultimate break down and enforced rest, and I don't know what beside. On Tuesday came an invitation from the Missionary Committee in London to go in May and take part in the Anniversary Services. If this affection of the throat doesn't get any better, I shall not be able to go.

21st January. The record of many a Sabbath is little more than this — 'getting through.' Yet I have whereof to be thankful even in this, but it will not be known till 'the day shall declare it.'"

His anxiety for visible fruit to his labour did not diminish. He records a few conversions, but was depressed by apparent want of success at South Parade.

4th February, 1877.—No visible conversions again! I begin to feel that South Parade will more than demand

the very best that I can do. That best, however, as long as I stay here, I am resolved to give, and hope for the best." That best was rewarded as he desired, though not to the extent he wished. The comparative smallness of the congregations at Halifax, after those he had left at York, acted depressingly, but he was often conscious of gracious help.

At the end of April he went to London, and spoke at the Missionary Breakfast at the Cannon Street Hotel. His subject was "the Tarrying Vision," and the speech itself a complete success. Many tokens of appreciation followed. It was felt both in the provinces and London that he had made his mark. The sermons on the Missionary Sunday were also greatly praised.

The affection of his throat did not improve. While his brief summer holiday improved his general health, his throat continued relaxed, in spite of the remedies employed. Special help was, however, given when needed.

"22nd July, 1877.—I have been specially helped from above, both morning and night, and to preach has in consequence been a pleasure. Two persons professed to find salvation to-night in the after meeting.

20th Aug.—Finished sermon on Saturday and launched it last night here having good time. One young man professed to get salvation after. Considerable spiritual help given both times."

In September he went to Matlock Bridge, and tried the hydropathic treatment, but received harm rather than good, as a general weakness of the system supervened. In addition to his throat trouble he had to contend with feeble action of the heart. But in spite of all, he enjoyed preaching, and had visible success, while for a few Sundays more he continued to work. After the 9th December he was compelled to take rest, and did not resume his labours until April 1878. He derived considerable benefit from a sojourn at Grange-over-Sands. The entries in his journal at this time are very touching, but show that in his weakness he was not forsaken.

"14th February, 1878, Grange.—I think I can say that I have gathered strength since I came here. The heart is decidedly stronger and I seem to have got rid of those night sweats. Still these are only comparative statements

and how long it may take before I am fit for work again, I cannot tell, and at times fear to think of. I sometimes fear the Lord is going to let me go to pieces, as a vessel no longer fit for sea, and then I think of wife and children, and shrink away from it. I should not be surprised if it turns out to be June or July before I can resume work. Of course, I know I have no claim to live, and my work in the Church and world can easily be dispensed with. My only plea when begging the boon of health at the throne is—God's unmerited mercy in Christ. Here I am, not knowing what all this may end in, and needing sorely to be held up by Divine hands. The Bible has been very precious to me these quiet days. It has not been often that I have read it without getting a blessing lately."

As the summer approached his health improved, and by the advice of his friends, he accepted an invitation to become Superintendent of the Brighton Circuit, hoping for complete restoration from the change to that mild climate. The friends at Halifax, though sorry to part with him, felt he had taken a wise step. With mingled hope and fear he entered on what proved to be his last sphere of labour.

CHAPTER VII.

BRIGHTON AND CONCLUSION. 1878—1880.

My brother's hopes of reinvigorated health were not realized. The record of the year's work, which somehow or other he got through, may be summed up in his own words as "a struggle for life." It is easy to be wise after the event, but there can be no question that what was needed was, a year's rest in a mild climate, and not a year's work. In addition to the responsibility of the superintendency, which did not sit lightly on him, he felt the claims of his congregations to be very important, and if he ever gained any strength during the week, he lost it all in the pulpit on the Sunday. Yet hoping against hope and encouraged by his medical adviser, who feared the effects of despondency, if he gave up work, he struggled on. It is painful to trace in the entries in his journal the stages of the long conflict between hope and fear through which he passed. It is grievous, too, to think that the eyes of his friends were holden that they did not see the necessity of immediate and prolonged cessation of labour; but regrets are unavailing, and we can only bow in submission to that Providence which permits or appoints all that happens to God's children, and which in the day of eternity will be found to have done all things well. Perhaps it will be well to let my brother speak for himself from the pages of his journal.

"September 28th, 1878.—The climbing of these hills and the distance of the chapels, &c., from here have acted prejudicially on my heart. I have been to Dr. M.—— about things in general, but privately have had serious fears that I shall be compelled to give over here before long, and have rest again.

30th.—At night, Dorset Gardens. When I got down I felt for some cause ready almost to faint, and wondered much how ever I could get through. But somehow I got better and had a good time in the sermon, and held a prayer meeting too. Certainly I was greatly helped. There were manifest signs of religious quickening about. If only health were allowed me, I should enjoy this place I think.

26th October.—A record of little else during the past four weeks, but an endeavour to do work against the weight of weakness. I have gained just a little strength perhaps but nothing to boast of, and I hardly know what is to be the end thereof.

16th November.—I think I am gradually gaining a little strength. I am certainly a good deal stronger than when I came here.

18th November.—Yesterday at both services I was conscious of help from above and proportionately enjoyed the services. The voice question was in the best condition since I have come here, and I really begin to think I may get back again the ability to speak without discomfort. Tried hard to catch souls at night, but don't know if any were caught.

21st December.—Last Sunday which was very cold, I enjoyed on the whole, having more vigour to work with. Held a Society Meeting at Norfolk Road, and felt I was helped generally during the day. I am beginning to positively enjoy preaching at Norfolk Road, which for a long time I only managed to get through. I seem to be quietly gathering strength through God's great goodness, which I mean to use for Him if I am allowed." Yet after the new year set in things took again a graver turn.

"18th January, 1869.—I have grave fears as to what this weakness is to end in, whether even now I may not be in the first stages of consumption. I think if I am allowed to regain health, I shall preach with greater effect than

before. I feel as if that were in me somehow, but whether it will ever be wanted, who can tell?"

On the night of the 10th February he was alarmed by symptoms of blood-spitting, which, however, soon passed away, and in March he was considerably stronger. He writes:—

29th March.—Dr. H.—— says he doesn't see why I should not accept their invitation, and stay and face the necessary work. This makes me feel that possibly God may after all restore me to health, and gives me a feeling of greater interest in life generally.

12th April.—This week has been rather more burdened with physical weakness and its suggestions. I am partly inclined to think that I grow a little less strong, and that the malady in the bronchi is really going lower still. I don't know how it may terminate, but He who keeps the keys of Hades and Death will order all things will.

26th April.—Weakness as usual all the week. I get no better in that respect, and the ever varying difficulties I have with voice in attempting to speak are sometimes a caution. Still I have some strength, and as the Sundays come round, I feel secret influences stirring me up to faith, and hope and energy. Still this cannot go on long I should think. I must get better or get worse by and bye, and I fear the latter, but if I live till to-morrow I will try to use what strength I have in another attempt at preaching."

At the end of May he started on a holiday excursion, hoping for improvement in health, but he took cold on the very first day in journeying, and returned home in the course of three weeks worse rather than better. Yet again he rallied and did his work, though beyond all doubt he ought to have rested completely. He writes:—

"26th July.—All I know is that I keep going on preaching somehow, and getting through. But oh! the difficulty of locomotion, especially in the afternoon. However, God knows all about it, and deals rightly with me beyond all question. If He be going by and bye to take me, I hope I shall be ready. The majority I know is over there, and Arthur and P.—— and S.—— and many, many more whom I have known. I don't know what to think of it hardly. I incline to the thought that the downward progress must continue, and I shall presently find that I am too weak to go on.

21st August.—Last Sunday I had perhaps as much vigour; if not more than I have had on any Sunday since I came here, and was helped from above beyond all question both times. I had a capital time at Dorset Gardens, and at night although I read the sermon the 'Anointing was upon me.'

A fresh cold was taken just after this, and resulted in increased lassitude. One record, however, shall be given.

"15th August. On Wednesday at Dorset Gardens I did enjoy the service—although very tired—and extemporized to some extent with some of the best effects of speaking, and I put down what was, humanly speaking, a successful effort entirely to the compassion and aid of God who knew how tired I was, and who would show me once more that He is near in time of need. It was a rememberable instance of Divine help."

After this his strength rapidly declined. His doctor, at the beginning of September, advised a short sea voyage. His friend, Mr. George Lidgett, who was at that time living in Brighton, offered him a passage in one of his vessels, but advised that first an additional medical opinion should be obtained. My brother writes:—

"7th September, 1879.—Things physical not good with me. Appetite more and more depraved, and strength proportionately giving way. Moreover, these night sweats have been more and more violent. So I was examined again yesterday by Dr. H.——who said he could find no increase of mischief from last time, but cordially approved of the suggestion of a cruise somewhere or other for a month or two. Mr. Lidgett has kindly interested himself in my case, and offered me a passage in one of his ships, so what will come of it I hardly know yet, only that this seems clear, that if possible I ought to go somewhere or other, and attempt to live if I can. I must not say I am overwhelmed in the midst of all this, but I think I never was in such need of help of all kinds as now. I can indeed look with the interest of sympathy on the heading of the Psalm "De Profundis," &c., I am in the depths just now. I went down to Norfolk Road this morning, and read the sermon; I couldn't do more. I heard the sermon on Thursday night—also read from the same cause—had been largely useful to many. I wonder if I shall ever get out of

this, and be strong to labour again, or if I am to go down and down into the great silence."

On this day he preached his last sermons. The voice that had so faithfully and eloquently declared the Gospel message was henceforward to be heard in public no more. His last discourse was from the text, Luke iv., 18 and 19th verses, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken hearted, to proclaim deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." As a humble follower of his Divine Master, that passage expresses the spirit in which my brother laboured, and such a theme as "Jesus the Messiah," fitly closed his public career.

He went with Mr. Lidgett to consult Dr. Wilkes, of London, who at once ordered absolute rest from preaching or labour of any kind, and stated that a voyage would afford my brother the best chance of recovering health. After this interview follows the last entry in my brother's well kept journal:—

"Tuesday night, September 16th, 1879.—I am to be counted now as among those afflicted with the awful disease of consumption. I went up to London on Thursday, and saw Dr. Wilkes on Friday, who said there was a spot in the left lung at the top. I knew the rest, and I think he is correct, and that Dr. Hughes is not very far from the same opinion. Of course, it has been a great trial to go through, but now I feel calmer and more at ease about it. I must do no work here now, and get off to New Zealand, or wherever it is, with all convenient speed. I should be in an awful fix now without religion, but I think that if I am called to die, I shall have grace to do it."

Mr. Lidgett expected that the vessel in which my brother was to sail would touch at the Cape on the way to New Zealand, and in that case it was thought best that my brother should land at the Cape, and proceed to Graham's Town, the climate of which was highly recommended to him by the Rev. W. H. Tindall, who had been restored to health by a visit there, after being similarly affected. But Mr. Lidgett was disappointed in being able to procure a cargo for the Cape, and could only succeed in obtaining

one partly for Mauritius and partly for Rangoon. It was therefore ultimately decided that my brother, accompanied by his wife and children, should sail for Mauritius, and if benefited by the voyage, go on to Rangoon. Thence he was to return, either by mail steamer or in the vessel according to circumstances.

The necessary arrangements were quickly made. Through the abundant and unexpected kindness of friends at Brighton and in his old circuits, more especially York and Sunderland, all anxiety about financial necessities was completely removed. It greatly affected my brother, as post after post, right up to the day of leaving Brighton, brought substantial tokens of loving regard from his friends, and he said "This is indeed reaping carnal things, after sowing spiritual things. The Lord Jesus will account it done to him, and it will be found in the record to their credit at the last day." As everything had been so prosperously ordered for him, from the time that a voyage was suggested, to make it feasible to avail himself of such a means of recovery of health, I tried to persuade him to encourage himself with the hope of restoration; and to look upon what had happened as an indication of the will of God to grant his desire; the more so because during the last three weeks he was in England there was sensible improvement in the absence or mitigation of some of his most distressing symptoms. Moreover, the medical opinion was most hopeful. He admitted the force of the argument, but replied that it would not be unworthy of the Great Head of the Church to remove him after all, for the kindness shown to him would not be wasted, but be recompensed to his friends at last, while he himself felt how good God was in removing all cause for anxiety in what might prove his last days in England. His thoughts turned sometimes to the Lake District, where we had often walked together when he came for health and holiday from Sunderland, York or Halifax. 'Would he ever see it again? Would he ever climb a mountain again in this world? But who could say what beauties of nature there would be in the heavenly world?' He spoke of the wonderful help he had had in preaching during the year at Brighton; how graciously God had aided him to speak with unction in spite of his bodily weakness; and how

much better he thought he would be able to do his work in the future if God only gave him health. He was very sorry that Brighton had suffered so much from his inability to discharge his ministerial duties with efficiency, but possibly God had sent him there, to let the people see how a christian minister could die. With regard to his wife and children, he said he was sure God who had been so good to him, would provide for them, though he could not tell how; but he left all that with Him. Thus we talked, during the three weeks I spent with him helping in packing up, &c., before he sailed, but the memory of his devout submission to the will of God, of the evident meetness for the presence of Jesus which he manifested, and the realizing sense he had of the things that are unseen, will linger as an inspiration, and an additional inducement to be a follower of "those who through faith and patience now inherit the promises."

On the 15th of October we bade good bye to Brighton. The night was spent at the hospitable abode of Mr. W. Wood, at Blackheath, his wife's uncle, and the next morning he embarked on board the "Lorraine" at Blackwall. A considerable party including his, and Mrs. Anderson's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Wood, Mr. and Mrs. G. Lidgett, accompanied the travellers in the vessel as far as Gravesend where, in great sorrow, but also mercifully in great hope of meeting under more favourable circumstances in this world, the final adieus were spoken, and we parted to see his face here no more.

Of the voyage there is little to record. Buffeted in the English Channel by contrary winds, forced to return to the Downs after getting west of Brighton, with wife and children sick. and having rather to nurse others than be nursed himself, the commencement of the journey in search of health was not auspicious, and it can hardly excite wonder if the invalid thought the remedy was likely to prove worse than the disease, and was almost ready ere it was too late to return to land. But fairer weather came; and the last letter, sent through the channel pilot, breathed a spirit of cheerfulness, and intimated that so far, in spite of bad weather, he was rather better than worse. But unhappily any amendment was only temporary. When the vessel got into warmer latitudes, he was greatly tried

with the heat, and the disease made steady progress. Oppressed with weakness, he could do little but lie on deck during the day, and hope for a speedy voyage, and the opportunity of returning home. Yet there were some days when he felt better, than on others, and then he would sit on the deck reading or painting, in which he took great pleasure, or sketching for his children. He was never able to conduct service on Sundays with the sailors; the utmost he could do was to have worship with his family, at which exercise the mate frequently joined them. Long before the vessel was near her destination, the resolution had been formed to return by the first mail steamer, but for him God ordered otherwise. The Lorraine had rounded the Cape, and was in the Southern Indian Ocean, when on the night of the 27th December my brother was seized with hemorrhage from the lungs, and it soon became evident that the end was not far distant. After the first attack was over, he slightly rallied, and hoped he might be restored sufficiently to see his wife and children home again. When, however, increasing debility showed that he could not be here long, he desired to speak one more word for Christ before he laid down his commission, and asked that some of the sailors might be summoned, one by one, to receive his dying admonition. He was urged to spare his strength, but replied—"No, this is such a fine opportunity, and I want to be a preacher of Christ to the very end." His wish was granted; with what result the Great Day will declare. When talking was difficult, he wrote on a sheet of paper: "I think there can be no doubt I am soon going to die. I have peace, but no great joy." He also wrote a touching letter to his parents, in which he says:—

"I fear my coming back to see you all is not possible. I think Jesus is sending for me very soon, and I must go to Heaven instead of England. I shall be glad to go, but I want you and Papa to know that I love you very much, and shall joyfully look forward to seeing you soon in the presence of Christ." It was subscribed—

Your affectionate Son for *Ever*,

JOHN HENRY ANDERSON."

Afterwards, the following lines were addressed to me: "You and I will climb no more mountains here. I am

swiftly going to Jesus, but my best love is yours, and you will come after me, and who can tell what Scaw-fells we may find in Heaven."

No doubt he had often revolved in his mind the subject of one of our last conversations at Brighton, but what was uncertain then became a certainty now, he would never in this world climb a mountain again. The most assiduous attention was paid to his wants during his last brief illness. The services of the mate, Mr. C. Johnson, and of Mr. West, a son of the Rev. T. West, and one of the apprentices in the vessel, were invaluable, while his sorrowing wife bore up bravely to the last in her ministry of love. As the end drew near, he continually spoke of his love to Jesus, and his joy at the thought of going home to be with Him. He said the fear of dying was completely removed.

At last the summons came. He was heard faintly to whisper, "Yes, if you'll help, I'll climb," and in a few moments all was over, and his spirit released from the poor frail worn body, had mounted to the presence of the Master whom he had so loved, and the happiness of that life where there is no more death. The official record was as follows:—

"BARQUE LORRAINE, Jan. 3rd, 1880.

At twenty minutes after two this morning died the Rev. John Henry Anderson, aged 38 years and 6 months. Latitude of ship, 28 deg. 31 min. S. Longitude of ship, 61 deg. 46 min. E. Apparent time at Greenwich being January 2nd 10.13 p.m. At 4 p.m. of the same day read the Burial Service of the Church of England, and committed his body to the deep, the crew being all present. Position of interment, Lat. 27 deg. 24 min. S. Long. 61 deg. 43 min. E. P. NOWLAN." (Captain.)

Three days afterwards the Lorraine arrived at Mauritius, and anchored in the harbour of Port Louis. Mrs. Anderson and her children took the first steamer home, touching at Cape Town, St. Helena, and Madeira, and on the 19th of February, arrived at Plymouth.

The following notice in the "Methodist Recorder" of Feb. 27th, 1880, is from the pen of the late Dr. Punshon, a warm friend of my brother, whose own decease a bereaved church now sadly mourns:

"It is with no ordinary regret that we have to announce the death of the Rev. John H. Anderson, of Brighton, a young minister of more than common promise. Many in various parts of the kingdom will mourn his loss. He had a winning manner, a graceful elocution, a refined taste, and a well furnished and cultivated mind. He had also wide sympathies and a generous soul. His address at the Missionary Breakfast Meeting a few years ago will be long remembered for its fervid and chastened eloquence. If he had been favoured with robust health, he might have risen to eminence in the Connexion. But he fulfilled a useful ministry, and his sacrafice has been early accepted, and he has entered into his rest, The sting of Death was taken away, and, in the calmness of a resigned and thankful spirit, he submitted himself to the will of God—not insensible to the prospect of being cut off in the midst of his days, but conscious that

> "The Father's hand prepared the cup,
> And what He willed was best."

From the numerous letters of sympathy received after the news of his decease arrived we have only space for the following extracts:—

From the Rev. J. F. Broughton, of York:—"It was with profound sorrow that we heard of his death. I can assure you that nowhere is this loss to the church more deeply lamented than in York, where his fine christian character, his conscientious discharge of pastoral duties, and his brilliant gifts as a preacher, were highly appreciated. His memory will long remain fragrant here among a people who loved and honoured him."

From the Rev. W. G. Beardmore:—"Pray accept my sincerest and deepest sympathy in your great loss. As a colleague of your son, I found him ever true, candid and sincere; modest in his estimate of himself, and generous in his praise of others. He was an earnest and industrious pastor, and a gifted preacher."

The writer earnestly hopes that the sending forth of this memorial volume may serve to rescue from a premature oblivion the memory of a faithful minister of the Lord Jesus; give encouragement to young ministers, shrinking from the difficulties of their holy but arduous work, to persevere; and revive in those who were members of his

brother's congregations, hallowed recollections of those "seasons of grace and sweet delight," when he, whose voice is now hushed in death, was privileged to conduct their devotions, and minister to them so efficiently the word of Life. Most of all does he desire that his brother though dead may yet speak here, so that believers may be edified, and sinners won to the service of that Saviour who so early called him to his reward. One by one the servants of Jesus, however gifted, pass away to receive their reward from His own lips and in His own presence, while a sorrowing Church, lamenting their loss, and in danger of trusting for success too much in the servants, and too little in the Master, is taught the lesson which appears as a favourite quotation in my brother's journals, that "we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."

To Him who alone can call and qualify men for efficient service in His Church, be all the glory for the gift to His Church of the subject of this memoir, and for whatever good he was enabled to accomplish, during his, to our thinking, all too brief earthly career.

SERMONS.

SERMON I.

THE BENEFITS OF WAITING UPON THE LORD.

"*But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles: they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint.*"—Isaiah xl, 31.

WE have here some of the benefits of waiting upon God as they appeared in long past ages to the fervid soul of the prophet Isaiah. True Messenger of the Old Covenant, he continues to speak under the New, and his impassioned utterances challenge our attention equally with the arguments of Paul, the righteous invective of Jude, the curt simplicity of James, and the divine dogmatism of John. So largely, indeed, has he drunk into the Spirit of the latter days, that we might often fancy him one of those pastors and teachers whom the All-wise Spirit has set in the Church for the edifying of the body of Christ; and though this particular deliverance betrays the mountain-loving, danger-courting spirit of an old Hebrew Seer, it might not inaptly be the message of the gentlest ambassador of the Gospel of Peace. On this subject of Communion with God and the blessings which spring out of it, Prophets and Apostles are in perfect harmony, and the watchmen on the walls of Jewish Privilege and Christian Liberty see eye to eye.

Let us listen to this old message, which is also new. What does the Prophet say? He says:—

1.—*They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.*

This sounds a little as if they had difficult work to do, as if this godly life of theirs involved a considerable tax upon their spiritual strength; as if they were in danger of becoming "weary and faint in their minds." Is this really so? What do you say, Christian tradesman, who have

been occupying with the merchandise of earth all the busy week, whose brain is hardly yet free from the buzz and chaffer of the shop; or you who live amongst figures all the day; or you who work amid the rattle of many hammers, or the dust and heat of glowing furnaces; or you who delve the soil, or climb the rigging, or hew the timber, or square the stone? Is this really so? What do you say upon whom God hath laid the responsibilities of home and family? Does it ever come to pass that your strength needs renewal? Are children always docile? Are companions always helpful? Are servants always the true helps they might be? Is the government of the household a lesson that can be learnt in a day? What do you say, christian citizen, in these stirring times? In the rub and conflict of opinion, in the haste and heat of public meetings, in the excitement of discussion, in the hot encounters of the political or civic arena, do you find no special call made upon your faith and godliness? What do you often say whom the arrows of affliction have wounded? Is it an easy matter to bear up beneath the torment of trembling nerves, and the sharper anguish of head and heart? Do the days when you count the hours till sundown, and the nights when you lie and long for the morning make no demand on patience? Or you who feel the sharper pang because those you love are suffering—is that sick chamber where you watch no scene of conflict? Does the mystery of evil never come out to meet you? Does the strange riddle of this mortal life never demand solution at your hands.

What do you say to this—just escaped from the bondage of iniquity, and learning for the first time the awful secret of the "temptation of the devil?" Do you find the meshes of his net airy as gossamer, and only needing a breath to break them? Are his suggestions no more to you than the ravings of a madman, or the gabble of a fool? Or you who are almost in sight of the city, and "not ignorant of his devices"—does it still cost you nothing to say "No" to evil? Does this "wrestling not with flesh and blood" seem to you mere child's play? Is "the hour and power of darkness" nothing more to you than a phrase of some fertile fancy?

What do you say—busied this last week in the Church's

work? Do men always receive your message? Do you never cry, "Lord who hath believed our report?" Sower in the Lord's wheat-field—do you always gather in a harvest? Herald of the Lord's coming—do His subjects never laugh defiance in your face? Proclaimer of the Lord's mercy—does every guilty sinner receive your tidings? Preacher of the Lord's Gospel—is your word always "mixed with faith" in them that hear it? In your necessary contact with the dullness, and the obstinacy, and the littleness, and the selfishness, and the vanity, and the self-conceit of men, do you never feel inclined to say—"Lord, send by whom thou wilt send, but *not* by me?" Worker in the Lord's vineyard—when your motives are misjudged and your deeds condemned, when after your best endeavours to help men, you are met by aggravated insult, and it seems as if the holier your intention, the harsher their criticism, do you never feel inclined to throw it up altogether, and if they will go wrong, to let them? Ah! brethren, why do I thus speak? Do we not all know, who know anything of the life of faith, our need of a power not our own to save us? Have we not all learnt, by painful experience, how easily the firmest resolutions become enfeebled in the day of trial, and how certainly, if left to our own resources, we faint and fall? Nay, though we have in some sort learnt to gather strength from the right source, who of us does not feel the necessity of again and again returning to that sacred fountain, lest languor deepen into weariness, and weariness sicken into swooning, and from swooning we sink into sin? To all such the promise of the Scripture will be very welcome, "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength."

The least that this can mean is that they shall *stand their ground.* He whom they talk with will give them moment by moment grace to "hold fast whereunto they have attained," and though they know not how exactly, they shall find that from each audience with the King, they come away clothed with power. But it must mean something more than "they shall not retreat—these soldiers of the Cross," though in a warfare such as ours not to have yielded is itself a victory. It must mean "they shall advance," they shall make sure and steady progress

against the foe; and though they may not all at once rejoice over his absolute withdrawal from the field, they shall know that he is falling back on all hands. But the margin speaks of this renewal as a *change of strength*, as if it would *remind us of the manysidedness of the grace of God*, and its perfect adaptability to our ever-changing needs. It seems to say to us that if we are called to journey, prayer will be the staff for our hands to lean on, or the shoes for our feet to wear. If heavy weather threaten us, prayer shall be a refuge from the tempest, and a covert from the storm. If the sun beat hot upon our head, prayer shall be the green leaves that shelter, or the great rock that shades. If prosperity crown us, prayer shall keep us from forgetting God; if adversity buffet us, prayer shall save us from charging God foolishly. If we have to fight against our Master's enemies, prayer shall keep the shield unbroken, and the sword-edge sharp. If we have to bear our Master's cross, prayer will help us to be at ease beneath the burden, and to glory in the shame. If the World assault us, prayer will help us to detect its purpose, to disbelieve its promises, to despise its honours, to defy its frowns. If the Flesh assault us, prayer, like some holy Samuel, shall hew the soft-lipped traitor in pieces before the Lord; and if the Devil assault us, prayer shall give us power to utter, "Get thee behind me Satan," and then, as in our Master's darker trial, it shall be as if we heard the whisperings of the Angels' sympathy, and the glorious music of the Angels' song.

"They shall renew their strength." But the prophet goes on to say

II.—*They shall mount up with wings as eagles.*

This seems to say that the life of communion with God is not a long series of vapid and unemotional hours, or a dead level of mechanical and spiritless employments, but a life that has rare and glorious experiences, holy aspirations, ennobling thoughts, spirit-stirring hopes, ecstatic emotions. "Wings as eagles"—how shall I explain this? But for the fact that I have stood sometimes after long climbing where the eagle makes her nest, and seen for a moment or two what she sees always, I should have hardly any idea of it, but I see a little of its meaning, I think.

1.—*Purer air*, for one thing. Down there, the dust and dirt of cities; noisome odours, filling street, and court, and alley; choking fogs that hang over the black flood that men call the river; long rows of chimneys vomiting forth their defiling breath; vile abominations breeding fever; numberless evils that pour their sickness-making influences on the heavy air; but up above, grasses waving in perennial greeness; flowers putting on their own gorgeous apparel; fragrant odours of earth that bring back memories of Eden; breezes that bring the colour to the cheek, and the spring to the muscle. and the flash to the eye. It shall be so, it is so, with those that "wait upon the Lord." While they who mind earthly things are down there, and always must be down there, and they who desire goodness, but follow it afar off, if they mount with wings at all, mount with but feeble flutter, and are soon down again, they who wait upon the Lord are high above them; and there is a vigour about their profession, and a spring about their Christian activities, and a beauty about their goodness, and a perfume about their piety, that the others never know.

2.—*Clearer Vision*, for another thing. Down there the view is often spoiled by creeping mists and gloomy shadows, and look how you will, men seem like trees walking; but, up where the eagle hovers, you will see things in their proper shape and colour. Is not this true of those that wait upon the Lord? Down below it looked like a premeditated insult; up above it was a piece of mere forgetfulness, not worth taking any notice of. Down below it seemed an irreparable injury; up above it was a mere scratch upon the skin. Down below it was a formidable duty, up above a precious privilege. Down below it was a knotted cord, wielded by a cruel foe; up above it looked like a Father's chastening, dealt out by a Father's hand. Down below it was a frowning thundercloud; up above it was seen that there was light upon the other side. Down below the trial seemed like a stroke of vengeance; up above it was a touch of tenderest compassion. Down below it was a sickness that enfeebled the body; but up above you saw that it had strengthened the soul, and what in the gloom down there was a bereavement that covered the heart with darkness and filled the eyes with tears, in

the light above was seen to be a messenger from the Master's presence, that summoned to the Master's home.

3.—*Untroubled quiet*, moreover. Has that never struck you—you that have climbed at times—the rare stillness of the mountain tops?

But for the wind that breathes about you, or the hum of some wandering bee, or the cry of some bird that loves the hills—nothing! No roar of city life, no clang of hammers, no whirr of machinery; these are far beneath you. Hushed also is the low of cattle, and the tinkle of the sheep-bell, the brawl of the brook, and the rattle and roar of the cataract—all hushed and still! Would it be so if we listened from the wings of the eagles? It is so when we walk with God. No one knows but he who has the secret of this Divine communion, how deep a quiet God breathes about the heart that loves to speak to Him. Hushed is the din of busy life around him, hushed the roar and racket of the godless world, hushed is the vain jangling of false philosophies, and the noisy challenge of contending creeds; hushed is the babble of the frivolous, and the laughter of the fool; hushed is the threatening of tyranny and the boasting of pride; hushed is the wailing of sorrow and the shrieking of despair; hushed often, too, the hiss of Satan's vile suggestions; while in a peace that passeth understanding, the praying spirit listens to the still small voice of God.

4.—*Rare landscapes*, too, greet his eye who mounts up with wings as eagles. You know what it is too look on Nature from the level. Can you fancy what it must be to look from eagles' wings? Can you fancy what it is to have beneath you the beauty of the earth from horizon to horizon? Look! Brooks lying among the fields like threads of silver, rivers like bars of light; yonder the ploughed fields, bare and brown, and there the meadows, dressed in living green. Far off the mighty city, covered with its smoky pall; nearer you the little village lying on the slopes of the hills, or nestling in their wooded hollows; and, dotted here and there, over hill and valley, solitary farmsteads; while, higher up among the rocks, are huts for shepherds, and lonely folds for sheep. And there the reedy marsh where the wild fowl nestle, and there the pool where the village children play, and there the lake over

which the white sails glide. And yonder, pleasant foot-paths lying through field and fallow, and yonder, lonesome roads creeping over moor and moss. And all around you splintered crag and massive boulder, beetling cliff and lichen-covered cairn, hill on hill lifting their hoary summits to the skies, and far away in the distance the shining glory of the silver sea! It is like that with those that wait upon the Lord. Lifted up on faith's strong eagle pinions *over the great World of God's written revelation* what prospects they rejoice in! What order and beauty, harmony and sublimity they descry! Here crags of warning, and there meadows rich with promise; here rills that whisper truth, and there torrents that roar it; here moorsides fragrant with the wild flowers of a heathen's goodness, and there fenced-in gardens, where grow the rarer beauties of a Christian's trust; here the straight and narrow way of duty, and there the slippery by-path of a selfish ease—while all around them rise the untrodden hills of prophecy and promise that sink and swell and lose themselves, where in the softened radiance of an Eternal Sunshine break and ripple the waves of the sea of glass.

Or if these pinions raise him above *the world of human life*, it is still the same with him—he sees what none others see. He sees order where others see confusion, He sees troubles working trust, follies making way for wisdom, wars and tumults heralding the reign of peace. He sees the discoveries of science, the achievements of art, and the judgments of philosophy serving to assist religion. In the downfall of old tyrannies, in the spread of commerce, in the broadening of the people's liberties, and the better understanding of the people's rights, he sees not chaos or chance, but God—God "putting down the mighty from their seats, and exalting them of low degree," God binding men's furious passions, God curbing men's restless souls, God maintaining His rightful authority, God executing His most holy laws, God remembering His most faithful promises, God proclaiming His everlasting Gospel, God preparing the heathen to be Messiah's inheritance, and the whole converted world to be Messiah's crown! Shall I say once more that they that wait upon the Lord shall have

5.—*Unclouded Sunshine?* Yes, it is gloriously possible. This is not poetic rhapsody, but sober truth. What is that

"fulness of joy" that Jesus pressed upon his disciples? Is not that unclouded sunshine? What is that perfect love of which St. John so often speaks? What is that being "filled with all the fulness of God" for which St. Paul in his letter to the Ephesians was instructed to pray? Have we not here as much as may be known on earth of the perfect bliss of heaven? Phrase it how you please, when a man walks with God and talks with God—and according to that great Scripture, they "have fellowship one with another"—if his joy do not mount up to the ecstasy of those who see Him as He is, it is at any rate not broken by interruption or bedimmed by cloud. With this joy "no stranger intermeddleth," into this holy secret no sinner pries, but they "that wait upon the Lord" may know it, and though the infirmities of mortality are upon them, it is not wrong to say that they are

> "Like some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,
> Swells from the vale and midway leaves the storm,
> While round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
> Eternal Sunshine settles on its head."

But that is not all. The prophet tells us

III.—*They shall run and not be weary.*

I can only mention now one of the many meanings this may bear, or rather what seems to me the pith of them all—*capacity for the most strenuous exertion.* They shall run. Wherefore? Because the King's business requires haste. Would that the King's servants always felt this! We are too ready to imagine that our work is to be literally easy, and our christian witness-bearing literally light. But if ever the world is to be won to Christ, we shall have to endure hardness for Him. We shall have to ponder deeply the great questions of the social and moral well-being of what are called the masses, the ignorance and depravity of our large towns, the semi-serfdom of the agricultural population, the great problem of the drunkenness that disgraces our national life and what can be done to remove it, and many kindred subjects that, as yet, we have hardly looked at. We shall have to lay hands to the work as well as head, and really act as men who vividly realize the profound statement that "God so loved the World that He gave His only begotten Son," and St. Paul's significant judgment that "if one died for all, then were all dead." We want the courage that will

lead us to brave any danger, and to dare any difficulties in Christ's name, the whole hearted consecration which will set us upon doing large works for Christ's sake, and on the signal of His bidding, will send us with unquestioning obedience to publish peace to far off tribes and nations, or make us stand, Jonah-like, amongst the crowds of our own neighbourhood, and cry—"Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be destroyed." That power we shall gain, and only gain, by waiting upon the Lord. And yet once more

IV.—*They shall walk, and not faint.* Is this the same as saying that we shall have the power *of steady perseverance, of patient endurance under protracted trial?* Did the prophet put this last in his brief summary, because patience is usually one of those Christian graces that has its perfect work the latest, because the bearing of the Lord's burden is often much more difficult than the doing of the Lord's work? And was it because He would encourage us by the assurance that even that power, difficult of attainment as it is, shall yet be ours through prayer? Thank God for the assurance then, for we greatly need it! "They shall break down under the trial," suggests the Devil. "Nò," says the prophet, "they shall bear up bravely." That is, if in the great warfare it is not theirs to be conspicuous in the battle-field, they shall receive power to be loyal in the barracks. If on the seas of christian activity, it is not theirs to lead the squadrons of exploration, they shall at least be vigilant in the roadstead, and alert about the shore. If in God's forest-lands they are not called to hew down the choicest timber, they shall be laborious among the brushwood, and diligent among the thorns. If over the great province of Duty, they are not called to tread the highlands of a marvellous and magnificent service, "along the cool sequestered vale of life," they shall "keep their noiseless, solitary way." Thus shall it be with them that wait upon the Lord.

And now, dear brethren, all this has but one lesson which I want to leave with you now—be men of prayer. If you covet for yourselves a vigorous and enlightened piety, a religion that shall be good for the street as well as for the sanctuary; if you want peace in the heart, and purity in the conduct; if you desire the luxury of a conscience void of offence, and the sweet satisfaction of a spirit in

which there is no guile; if you would be somewhere higher than the misty levels of doubt and fear, and somewhat nobler than a man who has a correct creed, but a powerless, passionless Christianity, if you want to live for something more satisfying than pleasure, to gather treasures more enduring than gold, and to seek for the honour that cometh from God only, if you desire a death-bed haunted by no doubt or fear, and if you wish to stand before the Saviour at His coming "not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing," you must partake the spirit, and follow the example of those who "wait upon the Lord." Nothing to you is of half so much importance as this. If you neglect it, your spiritual life shrivels and pines into a miserable faintness. If you forsake it altogether, you are dead while you are living, but if you live in its constant exercise, it may be said to you, with deep and gladsome emphasis, that all is well. For lower service other things may be helpful, and other labours in place. but for you, a Christian, with the highest of all vocations, the most ennobling of all employments, and the brightest of all prospects, communion with God is the one thing needful, always and everywhere blessed.

Oh! choose this one thing, and practise it. Walk with God, though you know no other friend. Wait upon the Lord, though you are denied all other companionship, and soon it shall be yours to rise on other wings than eagles' into those serener heavens where you shall serve Him, and never more grow weary, and see Him without a veil between.

SERMON II.

THE "ADDENDA" OF FAITH.

"*And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.*"—2nd Peter i, 5-7.

ST. PETER is speaking here to the "builders together with God," and as he marks the tower of a holy life arising from the broad basis of a God-given faith, he says to them—"The storms are coming, and this tower needs strengthening to meet them. Build up these seven buttresses against it, for if ye do these things ye shall never fall." He speaks to those who labour in the Christian vineyard, and says to them—"Here are seven clusters of delicious fruit that the lord of the vineyard loves. Cultivate them with all care that when He comes to receive of the fruits in their season, you may lay them with gladness at His feet." He speaks to those who are ambitious of the Well done of their Lord's approval, and says—"Here are seven jewels that must be cut and polished, and set upon the shining circlet of your faith in Him; seek them and set them there, that in the day of His coming He may be graciously pleased to accept it, and touching it into a yet more perfect beauty, may place it upon your brow for ever." Let me try to expound His words; to show you these seven buttresses of the christian character, their shape and form, the courses of the masonry, the quality of the stone; to hold up before you these seven clusters of the christian Eshcol that you may see their bloom and beauty; and to describe these seven gems that shine in the christian coronet, that you may be seized with a holy

desire to have them as your own, and that in the end an entrance may be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Before I speak of the first of these christian graces, let me remind you of the significant words that precede and point to them all—"giving all diligence." It is not an easy work to which our Master calls us in the sense that we have nothing to do but to stretch out our hands to grasp the luxuriant treasures of the earth that each season will bring of itself. We are in Immanuel's ground, in the domains of faith, sheltered and blessed by the precious promises, but the ground wants tilling, and the law that governs its operations is that which rules in other and darker regions—"whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." If we plough a slovenly furrow, and sow with careless indolence, and harrow slothfully, even God's fields of grace will laugh at us in harvest time, but if we give all diligence, if we summon up all our resolution, if we bend all our energy to the task, plodding on in patient perseverance to the end, then no fields shall wave with greater plenty, and no husbandmen shall garner more golden sheaves, or be glad with a merrier joy. Then giving all diligence, let us add to our faith

1.—*Virtue.* The meaning of this word is a little different from that which it very generally bears now. This virtue is not uncorrupted innocence, the meek harmlessness of an untainted purity, but a holy energy, a bold uncompromising courage. How aptly this is placed at the head of the catalogue! Of what use will any christian be, if this be lacking? This is the muscle in his spiritual system; without it, he will be inert and feeble. If he journey at his Lord's command, there will be no spring in the footstep, no eagerness in the eye. If he bear witness of his Master before men, his testimony will lack point and power. If he has to cultivate a part of his Lord's vineyard, he will be languid beneath the sunbeams, and shiver in the cold. If he has to fight the good fight of faith, you had better put him in the rear among the baggage. The snorting charger that he rides will show a greater bravery than he. If he has to teach men of the good and right way, you will wonder whether he is discussing a probability

or caressing a doubt. If he has to struggle with temptation he will resist the Devil with such irresolution that Satan will be emboldened to make another charge upon him. If he has to console the troubled and sorrowful, his comfort will be commonplace and weak. If duty summon him to holy enterprise for Christ, he may march in the body of some expedition, but he will never lead the van. If he has to be an ambassador for Christ, he will be in danger of taking his Sovereign's message with bated breath and whispering humbleness, or if necessity compel him ever to go out and bid defiance to some Goliath of iniquity, it will be well if in his weakness he do not whimper into tears. Now this is not what our Master wants to make us. A Christian of this feeble kind could at no time hope to do much or be much in the world, and less than ever now. There is a forcefulness about the world's hostility to truth, so must there be about our friendship to it. We can't afford to stammer over the articles of our belief, or to stumble over our daily practice of them. We can't afford to toy and trifle with the solemn opportunities of Being—we must use them and use them well. We can't afford to go through this earthly battlefield with listless foot and dainty hand, perfumed raiment and beflowered brows, while Light and Darkness heave and struggle in the dread encounter, and men are dying, and men are dead. If we would escape the everlasting hiss that will one day greet the cowards of the world, if we would do aught worthy of our manhood and our Master, if we would stop the sneer of the shallow, and the laugh of the profane, if we burn to do Satan damage and to make earth any more like heaven, if we would hear from Jesus at the last, "Well done good and faithful servant," we must have this christian courage of which St. Peter speaks. Then persecution will not lightly fright us, the allurements of a pleasure seeking age will find us staunch and true, to the challenge of our crafty Adversary we shall return an everlasting refusal, and shall be born into the fellowship of those souls who through faith have conquered Self, resisted the Devil, and defied the World! Add to virtue,

2.—*Knowledge.* Mere strength except it be under the dominion of knowledge will be of little account to us. There are indeed most vigorous characters that are pro-

foundly foolish, and the more so that their folly has strength to back it. We must have these two united, vigour and knowledge to use it. If you have only the first you will be in danger of beating the air, fighting uncertainly; if you have the second, you will strike at the heart. Vigour's all very well in a vessel to heave at the windlass, to climb the rigging or to hold the wheel, but you want knowledge too that will watch the compass and consult the chart. Vigour's all very well on the farm, to handle the axe, to dig the drain, to sharpen the scythe, to drive the plough, but you want knowledge too that will consider the seasons and the soil, select the seed, observe the weather, and have an eye to the markets, or else there would soon be no wheat in the garner and no herd in the stall. And a zealous ardour is of great value to a christian character, but it needs to be tempered with discretion. We must not merely be warm hearted but clear headed, not less zealous but more wise, not less earnest but more intelligent. In declaring His testimony, we must be not less emphatic but more discriminating; in pleading at His mercy seat we must be not less importunate but more unselfish, in practising His holy precepts we must be not less prepared to give an illustration, but more ready to give a reason of the hope that is within us; in fighting the battles, there must be not any less of muscle, but more of mind, not less readiness to march but more to manœuvre, not less of that undaunted courage that flings itself upon the foe, but more of that disciplined bravery which, ever apprized of danger nigh, knows when to fight and when to fly; in doing His will upon earth there must be not less of Peter's readiness to fling himself into the water to go to Jesus, but more of John's love-lighted discernment that catches the familiar accent of the stranger, and whispers reverently to his impetuous brother "It is the Lord." And to knowledge,

3.—*Temperance*, that is, self control.

This is not monkish asceticism that wears hair shirts and feeds on bread and water. It is equally far removed from that Epicurean ease that disports itself in the costliest apparel it can gain and gorges itself to gluttony. It is simply self control, but it *is* self control, and mark you how wide that reaches. It is temperance in eating, that the table may not become a snare; it is temperance in drink-

ing, that what is pleasant may not become a poison, and what exhilarates may not enchain. It is temperance as to clothing, lest neatness become foppishness, and decency extravagance, and ornament an outrage. It is temperance as to ease, lest lawful rest become indolence, and the sleeper sink into the sluggard. It is temperance as to temper, lest allusions become cutting, and answers snappish, and looks sullen and sour; temperance when you are wronged, lest feeling become master, and indignation at the injustice hatred to the man; temperance in resisting error, lest faithfulness become offensive, and plainness meddle with personalities, and you strike the sinner when you want to strike the sin; temperance in our advocacy of the truth lest our arguments become one-sided, our eulogiums fulsome and our judgment strained. It is temperance in our business, lest we love the counter better than the mercy seat, and the excitement of trading better than the peace of God; temperance in our pleasures, lest amusements lead us into danger, and joyfulness become sinful jesting, and music tempt us into mischief, and company steal our hearts from God; temperance in our sorrows, lest regret become repining and mournfulness murmuring, and tears bitter, and we charge God foolishly. Temperance, not in one respect, but in all—that self control that like a strong armed charioteer can rein in the restive steeds of appetite and passion, and drive them along the straight way to Heaven, turning neither to the right hand of a dangerous license nor to the left hand of an unchristian bondage, listening neither to ascetic nonsense nor to the antinomian lie! And to temperance

4.—*Patience.* I believe this is very often reckoned among the less bright adornments of the christian character. A patient man is frequently laughed at as if he were spiritless. You may see a crowd of people gazing at the high spirited steed that spurns the rein and paws the ground, and snorts remonstrance to his master, or that when he pulls in the shafts, pulls as if he were dragging at the stars, but the patient animal that works all day at the plough, and moves about as fast the last hour as the first gains no attention. Yet farmers will know which will be of the most service to them. And in our higher sphere, patience, if not showy like energy, involves a vast amount

of power. Men have little conception when they see a patient man what it has cost him to become so. The discipline of life seems to aim at producing the growth of this in us, and we must encourage its cultivation too. We shall want it in varying circumstances.

We shall want it in adversity, when plans are thwarted, and diligence gathers no sheaves, and labour yields no fruit. We shall want it in sickness when

> "This sensuous frame
> Is racked with pangs that conquer trust,
> And Time a maniac scattering dust,
> And Life a fury slinging flame."

We shall want it in times of injury, when injustice burdens us, and in times of perplexity, when darkness wraps us round. We shall want it with dull men who do not see, and with obstinate men who don't want to see, and degraded men who cannot see the truth. We shall want it when the harvest of our spiritual labours seems long in coming, when the meadow grass is stunted, and the ploughed lands bear no corn; when the landscape of our life seems long in clearing, and instead of treading the highlands of a holy joy we trudge wearily along the valley of the shadow. We shall not need it beyond the river, but right up to its solemn margin we shall need to add to our temperance patience, for while we study to labour, we must also learn to wait! And to patience,

5.—*Godliness.* We often use this word now to express the entire of the Christian life—the whole sum of its virtues, but it can hardly bear that meaning here. Perhaps it is that habit of mind that we call spirituality, devoutness, that has a perpetual reference to and apprehension of God. This is needful lest our patience become the heartless endurance of the Stoic, and lest indeed from losing sight of its true support, it cease to be patience at all. We are to "endure as seeing Him who is invisible." We are to learn that bodies never sicken, and banks never break, and ships never founder, and slander never hisses, and enmity never blasphemes apart from the all controlling Providence of God. We are to see Him who is invisible in the accident that maims us, and in the slow disease that enfeebles us; in the scarcity that drives us to economy, and the hard toiling that consumes our strength; in the iniquity that has robbed us of our heritage, and the folly that has frittered

away our recompense; in the conspiracy that alienated our friend, and the bereavement that snatched away our child. We are to see Him who is invisible; permitting, directing, overruling, governing all things; our Friend, thinking of His humble associates; our Father, caring for His children; our God, making all things work together for good to them that love Him; and we are to believe that, however sharp the rattle of the hail, however rapid the sweep of the wind, however hoarse the roll of the thunder, however black the bosom of the clouds—that He ruleth all things for our benefit, rides on the whirlwind and directs the storm! And to godliness,

6.—*Brotherly kindness.* Though the spring of our religious life is above, the manifestations of it are among men. There is the household of faith that the grace of brotherly kindness will specially circle about, for we are not to cultivate the stranger's stiffness, but the brother's love. A sour godliness! What a strange connection of terms! That godliness must be of an imperfect sort that will allow of such an epithet being added to it. And yet you know the thing. It is distant and reserved, sometimes proper, but generally icy, given to see things sideways, and to set actions in a wrong light. It is suspicious and sharp, quick to see flaws, and scent errors. Its talk is often spiteful and sour, its looks are sour, its deeds are sour. Nobody likes it. It is a terror to the children, it is a mischief to the church, it is a stumblingblock to the world. We are not to be like that. Brotherly kindness is a genial thing that you cannot help but love. It is free and open-handed so far as it is able. It is generous, taking pleasure in doing good. It is confiding and truthful, open eyed and transparent. It is forbearing and hopeful, willing to imagine no evil, to put the best construction upon things, to make allowances, rather to suffer than retaliate, and when it cannot help but see the evil, it doesn't whisper it about, but weeps over it in secret. It is a tender hearted thing, melted into tears by the side of sorrow, and joyful by the side of joy. It is a forgiving thing, harbouring no old enmities, cherishing no rotten grudges, nursing no wretched spites and jealousies, but remembering its own iniquities, and often pondering that tender sentence of St. Paul—"And be ye kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another,

even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." And we are to add to our brotherly kindness,

7.—*Charity.* That is, we are not merely to cherish a special love for the brotherhood, but we are to care for the world. And perhaps it is especially fitting at a time like this that we should remind ourselves, how vast that world is, and how great its claims. Part of it is undoubtedly at our doors, and therein our charity must begin at home, but part of it is, and always must be, to us far, far away. And what claims has this world upon our charity? It is a world in darkness, and it needs enlightenment. Let our charity light the torch of truth, and carry it to the uttermost ends of the earth. It is a foolish world and needs heavenly wisdom. Let our charity set itself to teach the holy lesson. It is a world that has a false standard of value. It calls pebbles jewels, and tinsel gold. Let our charity explain the error, and adjust the gauge. It is a starving world, feeding upon swinish husks. Let our charity carry to it the Divine Bread. It is a world in slumber, sleeping when it should be roused, sleeping with wild mad dreams, sleeping into a stupor from which it can be roused no more. Let our charity clash the alarm bell of Christ's holy Gospel, and bid these sleepers rise. It is a poisoned world that hath taken of the fruit of the tree of evil knowledge, and writhes in its deadly anguish. Let our charity give it of the leaves of that tree of better knowledge that is for the healing of the nations. It is a suicidal world that has bared its breast, and holds the dagger ready. Let charity snatch the brand away. The world is like a traveller, lost among the mountains, longing for rest and home. Let our charity go and seek the wanderer and show the way. The world is like the victim of some infernal wizardry, spell-bound into dumbness, or maddened into raving. Let our charity hold up before it the talisman of the everlasting gospel, and break the cruel spell. The world is like a vessel, going to pieces out yonder, yet in sight of shore. Let our charity man the Missionary lifeboat, breast the billows, and save the crew. The world is like a soldier wounded to death upon the stricken field. Let our charity take her balm of Gilead, her bandages of grace, and her cups of living water, and the gaping wounds shall close, the glazing eyes shall

brighten, and the quivering lips shall speak. The world is not like, but is, in sober sad reality, a world in sin, with such stolid ignorance in it, such pitiable pride, such brutal cruelties, such untold agonies, such unspeakable pollutions, such abominable crimes, that one sometimes wonders that Jehovah does not sweep it out of His sight in a moment. Here is a field for this wide reaching grace of charity. Let us take the tidings to it that has brought life and health and happiness to ourselves. Let us publish far and wide the good news of salvation through a crucified Redeemer to the worst of sinners, and never stop in this unselfish toiling

"Till the whole world again shall rest,
And see its Paradise restored;
Till every soul in Jesus blest,
Shall bear the image of its Lord;
In finished holiness renewed,
Immeasurably filled with God."

And now, dear brethren, let me ask you if these things are at all in you, and if you are resolving that they shall abound. To what extent do they adorn your character? In what measure do they mark your daily life? I might speak of the peril of ignoring them, of the grief of the Master if we only partially cultivate them, and of the lower place in the Eternal Festival that such an enfeebled holiness will take, but I prefer to show you them, as I have tried this day to do, in their native beauty that you may be won to a holy desire to possess them, and to an unflagging diligence in the exercise of that faith in Jesus from which they all spring. And now let my voice cease, and the voice that began this sermon speak once more at its close, and tell you that "if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall; for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

SERMON III.

THE DEATH OF MOSES.

"So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor; but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day.—Deut. xxxiv, 5-6.

THE servants of the Lord all die well, but they do not all die remarkably. God always comforts them with peace in their departing, but He does not always do great marvels as they go. This servant of the Lord went away in peace, but he went away also in the midst of wonders that have not been often parallelled in the history of the race, and that are all the more impressive that they are only dimly hinted at. Awhile ago we looked together at a sinner's parting, slain in the dark night at Babylon; let us now go to the top of Pisgah, and see how a saint can die, unsmitten by sickness or by sword, in the broad light of day.

Yet before we go, standing in the plain of Moab, who can help but feel a chastened sadness, as he thinks of the *Stern Necessity* which this day has found another victim. Moses about to die! Another voice mighty in the council about to be stilled. Another hand strong for all holy labour about to lose its cunning. Another foot ready for all godly service about to take its last journey, another form long familiar amongst the princes of the people about to pass from their midst for ever. That eye has not lost its youthful brightness; it is no dimmer now than when a hundred years ago it scanned the rolls of Egyptian learning, or flashed amongst the brightest in the court of Pharaoh. That princely form is not bent with the weight of many winters; his natural force is no more abated than

when eighty years ago he struck down the Egyptian and avenged the Hebrew. That voice is no feebler now than when he stood before the amazed monarch forty years after, and in the name of a Mightier than he, thundered out "Let my people go, that they may serve me,"—and yet he must die! O Stern Necessity that thus robs the earth of her noblest and best! O Relentless Hunter chasing all of us, and coming up with the fleetest at the last. O inexorable Law that will listen to no excuse from any of us, and to the loudest cries for pity, has but one response, "It is appointed unto men once to die!" Even so, brethren. The "Must" of this decree knows no exceptions, and from its dread decision there is no appeal.

Yet wherefore this? Does any know the reason? Why must Moses pass away from amongst his fellows? Why must we also die? The answer is the same in every case; not for our righteousness' sake, but for our sin. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men for that all have sinned." The connection between sin and death was striking in the case before us. It was the wilderness of Zin, and there was no water for the people. Straightway they gathered themselves together against Moses and Aaron. Sharp and hot was the chiding. God heard it as well as they, and said, "Take the rod, and speak to the rock before their eyes, and it shall give forth water." Moses took it, and having summoned the congregation, said, "Hear now, ye rebels, must we fetch you water out of this rock," and then out of all patience with them, quite forgot himself for a time, lifted his hand, and smote the rock twice. It was a mistake, as all sin is, and though the water gushed out abundantly, Moses had done wrong, and from that hour was barred out from the promised land. His brother was involved with him in the sin, and was the first to pay the penalty. At their next encampment, word came that Aaron's time was come. Accordingly, in the sight of all the congregation, he and his brother and his son went up into Mount Hor, they to watch with him to the end, and he to die. From that time the lawgiver has quietly waited for his own departure, and now at the end of the fortieth year from their coming out of Egypt, he is told that the hour has come.

Moses is ready, but before he passes from their midst for ever, he must gather his people together. and give them a final charge. And so they came, and stood with feelings better imagined than described to hear his latest words. He reviewed the whole way in which the Lord had led them, and pointed out its mercy and its judgment. He declared once more to them the law they were to keep with its sanctions of reward and punishment, and in the most solemn manner possible charged every one who heard him to keep the covenant and follow the truth of God.

Then his friend and former servant Joshua must be encouraged to take his place and finish the work which, through that one fatal slip at Meribah, he is obliged now to leave. And then, all earthly arrangements completed, there is nothing for him but to go up into the mountain, gaze upon the land of promise, and, as God shall give him grace, to die.

And so at last it came, and the servant of the Lord began to climb the mountain from which he would come down no more. The historian, as if with a soldier's brevity, only says that he went up unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, but surely it is not irreverent to let our fancy linger on the manner of the going. All the people knew that he was going, but did they know the day? And when it came, for they would know it at the last, was it in the early morning that they gathered, or in the eventide, to see their leader go? It was in the sight of all the congregation that his priestly brother went up that other mountain—surely they cannot be fewer who will watch the ascent of this. As the hour drew on, the camp must have presented an unwonted sight, with its knots, and groups, and companies who stood at the tent doors, and in excited silence, thronged the way to the tabernacle. But who shall paint for us the picture, as from out that sacred place there came, for the last time, its illustrious builder, and, through the thronging multitudes, passed slowly onward and upward to his rest? Who walked by his side on this last march, and what were the latest accents of those lips, so often touched by hallowed fire. We do not know, but there came at length a time when those who followed him the farthest must say farewell, and leave him to go forth alone.

And forth he went from their midst, blessing and blessed, alone and yet not alone, to climb the hill—and die!

And now, *alone at last*, the sob, and sigh, and wail of the great multitude left far behind him, what has he to think of? He has always been one of those who loved the hills. A great and fiery and passionate soul such as his would be at home amongst their gloomy grandeur. The glory of the great mountains must have always moved him. He could not have been insensible to their subtle and thrilling charm, but I imagine that to-day thoughts like these were shut out by greater ones. The broadening landscape, the glint of the sunlight upon the granite, the cataract flashing from the heights, the sparkling rivulet, the play of colour on the lichen-covered rocks, the wild music of the wind among the crags, the awful steeps that seem to slip into fathomless abysses, and the great heights piled up one behind the other till they seem to kiss the skies—these things, however glorious at other times, I imagine had no glory now. He was about to pass into Eternity, and these are but the footstool of Him in whose presence he is about to stand. Yet surely as he slowly mounted the shoulders of Nebo, he would think upon that other mountain, where, from the midst of the unburning bush, he received the commission that now he is laying down, and of that flaming summit from which God spake to the listening congregation with sound of trumpet; and then perchance of those sacred heights where, with covered face, he stood in the cleft of the rock while the glory of the Lord passed by; and then of the mountain by the land of Edom where he watched his brother die. And as he slowly climbed from point to point did not memory take a still wider sweep? The days of boyhood, did not they come up before him, spent by the waters of the broad Nile, days of quiet study in the palace, days of fierce excitement in the field? And that day—day of days to him—when he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter and for the sake of conscience flung away a crown; could that be forgotten then? And the eighty years between, with all their marvels, the long schooling in the wilderness, the sudden signal that the time was come; the grapple with the gods of Egypt, those appalling wonders in the land of Ham; and then, the hasty march from out the land; the

midnight sweeping through the divided sea; the marvel of the food that every morning dropped from heaven; Rephidim with its chidings for want of water, and struggle with Amalek; Sinai with its clouds and darkness; Kibroth Hattaavah with its graves of lust; Kadesh with its miserable cowardice; Korah's insolent rebellion; the lifting of the serpent in the wilderness; Sihon's fruitless resistance; Balak's thwarted enchantments on the top of Peor; the snares of Midian and stout-hearted Phineas, and all the wonders of the way in which the Lord has led him—these things surely were with him as he went up the hill to die.

And would that be all that he would think of, a man who before the nightfall will be in the Great Presence? What of his reputation; would that trouble him? No. What of the authority that this day has fallen into other hands; would the loss of that distress him? Oh no. What of the gold and silver he has left behind him; does he grieve for that? No. If there were grief at all to Moses now, it would come from quite another source. Good men do not depart in darkness, but if there be aught of gloom about their going, what makes it? What is the thorn to men in dying pillows; what is it makes that last cup so intensely bitter? Brethren, "the sting of death is sin." Moses knew this, and if there was anything of sadness about him now, it would be the remembrance of his own iniquities. Sin is apt to appear extremely sinful at a time like this, and there have been instances not a few of good men being so confronted by the great Accuser in their dying hours as for a time at least to have well-nigh doubted of their being pardoned. It is never a sorrow to a dying man that he has done the right; but if there be regret then at all, the burden of it then as always is, "O the pity and the shame that I should ever have been so foolish, so thankless, so base as to have grieved my God." Whether thoughts like these were in the mind of Moses now, I cannot tell; it may be that the exceeding greatness of God's mercy quite bore down the remembrance of personal unfaithfulness; but we may be sure of this, that if ever a human spirit went to God in chastened humbleness, it was when the illustrious leader of the host, pardoned for his iniquity, a sinner saved by grace, climbed the rocky steep of Abarim to die.

With thoughts like these, Moses reached at last the highest summit, and standing upon the top of Nebo felt that his last earthly journey was done. So this was his place of dying—the storm-swept summit of Nebo. Wherefore not? To a good man it matters little where he dies. It may be well to lean the head on downy pillows, but it is also well to die amid the splintered crags of such a mountain as this. Such a place as this had no doubt often been to him a place of prayer. True, men can pray everywhere, but the mountaintop where the chaffer of the markets is unknown, and hushed is the strife of tongues, innocent of the scoffer's gibing and the miser's greed, too high for the idle to attain to, too gloomy for the conscience-stricken, too useless for the worshippers of wealth, sacred to silence and to solitude and God, has ever been a fitting oratory to those who have loved the Lord, and now that the place of prayer is to be the place of dying, it is but making the outer court into the Holy of Holies, and changing worship that was like seeing through a glass darkly into beholding face to face!

Were any there to watch him as he stood? His race was nearly run, and it is often given to good men as they near the goal to see what is all concealed from others. Did Moses stand alone upon the summit? Were there any come to meet him? There is often music heard by dying ears—and sometimes I believe by the living too—struck from no earthly instruments. Was there aught of that mingling with the sighing of the wind around this dying man? We do not know, but we may be sure that he felt himself encompassed by the Divine arms: God was with His servant, and now that heart and flesh were about to fail, was the strength of his heart and his portion for ever.

But before the moment comes he must see the land of promise. And God showed it to him. There it lay before him, the goal of forty years of wandering. Far to the north, stretching away into dimness, Gilead and Dan. To the west, the hills of Naphtali; nearer, the land of Ephraim and Manasseh; immediately opposite, all the land of Judah, and beyond them the Western Sea. Just below him was Jericho with its clustering palm trees, and far away to the left, dale and down, reaching to the wilderness of Zoar.

"And the Lord said unto him, this is the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed. I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither." "Even so," would no doubt be the reverent reply, "good is the word of the Lord."

The landscape viewed, he has nothing more to do but die. Into the secrets of those last moments it is impossible to penetrate. This one thing we know that God was with His servant, and that death had no terror. Yet whether it was broad daylight when he went away, or the sun had gone down, and whether with one sudden pang the silver cord was loosed, or sinking into painless slumber, he glided through the gates, and found himself in heaven ere he knew it, we can only imagine, but we know he died—died as became a sinner saved by grace, died as became a valiant and faithful soldier of the Lord, and "passed through death triumphant Home!"

Beyond the mountain top we cannot follow him. Into what scenes of activity his happy spirit passed, what new labours were assigned him, what rarer splendours, what richer landscapes greeted his astonished vision, what grander revelations fell upon his raptured ear, we do not know, but we do know that to him as to all good men to die was gain, present, unutterable, everlasting gain, and we are quite sure that over this servant of the Old covenant there was pronounced as true and emphatic a benediction as that which awaits the disciple of the New—"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord."

"So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab over against Beth-peor; but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day." One can hardly forbear quoting the noble lines of C. F. Alexander—

By Nebo's lonely mountain,
On this side Jordan's wave,
In a vale in the land of Moab,
There lies a lonely grave.
And no man knows that sepulchre,
And no man saw it e'er,
For the angels of God upturned the sod,
And laid the dead man there.

That was the grandest funeral
That ever passed on earth;
But no man heard the trampling,
Or saw the train go forth—

Noiselessly as the daylight
Comes back when night is done,
And the crimson streak on ocean's cheek
Grows into the great sun;

Noiselessly as the spring time
Her crown of verdure weaves,
And all the trees on all the hills
Open their thousand leaves;
So without sound of music,
Or voice of them that wept,
Silently down from the mountain's crown,
The great procession swept.

But when the warrior dieth,
His comrades in the war,
With arms reversed and muffled drum,
Follow his funeral car;
They show the banners taken,
They tell his battles won,
And after him lead his masterless steed,
While peals the minute gun.

Amid the noblest of the land
We lay the sage to rest,
And give the bard an honoured place
With costly marble drest,
In the great minster transept,
Where lights like glories fall,
And the organ rings, and the sweet choir sings,
Along the emblazoned wall.

This was the truest warrior
That ever buckled sword;
This, the most gifted poet
That ever breathed a word;
And never earth's philosopher
Traced with his golden pen,
On the deathless page truths half so sage
As he wrote down for men.

And had he not high honour,—
The hill side for a pall,
To lie in state, while angels wait,
With stars for tapers tall,
And the dark rock-pines, like tossing plumes,
Over his bier to wave,
And God's own hand in that lonely land
To lay him in the grave?

So was closed a life of faithful service with a death of glory. The happy spirit went into the presence of God, and in that nameless grave in Moab, the sacred dust awaits a joyful resurrection.

There are few of us here to-day in whom this story will not cause some sympathetic thrill. There are few families that have not had to weep over someone gone from their midst, and it may be some of us are mourning their departure still. Thrice blessed are they who can write upon the tombstone what is written here of Moses, "Servant of the Lord." Concerning these indeed our tears may well

be dried. They are in the Saviour's presence, safe for ever in the arms of Jesus. Who could wish them back again? They rest from their mortal toil; who could burden them again? The cold earth does not cover them —it is but the dust that is sleeping there—they are for ever with the Lord. Glory to God for their peaceful departure. Glory to God for the bright hope that blessed their dying moments. Glory to God for the victory that made dying glorious!

Nor is it less true that they are blessed whom the Captain of our salvation called before they were old enough for war. They never bore the armour, or endured hardness as good soldiers. They never stood at the dividing line of destiny, and chose, as Moses did, to suffer affliction with the people of God. They never felt the mystery of good and evil. They went away in their helpless infancy, not from Pisgah's summit, but from the mother's knee, from the crib and from the cradle,

"Out of pain and into bliss,
Out of sad and sinful weakness
Into perfect holiness.
Snowy brows—no care shall shade them;
Bright eyes—tears shall never dim;
Rosy lips—no time shall fade them;
Jesus called them unto him
Little hearts for ever stainless,—
Little hands as pure as they,—
Little feet, by angels guided,
Never a forbidden way!
They are going—ever going—
Leaving many a lonely spot;
But 'tis Jesus who has called them—
Suffer, and forbid them not!"

And our turn will come, and the place that now knows us, will know us no more for ever! It is hard to realize, but absolutely true, that we are dying men! One by one we shall pass away from this congregation, and others will take our place. New voices will speak from the pulpit, new faces will be seen in the pew, and in a few years not one of us will be left alive. But where and what will be our condition then? Shall we be missed on earth or forgotten? Will our memory be blessed and fragrant, or will men shun the mention of it? Will those who follow us be able to say that we are gone home to Jesus, or will they be obliged to leave it, hoping against hope? And we, the worshippers down here to-day, shall we be within that better temple, or cast out into the outer darkness? Dear brethren, I know

what each of you will wish concerning this, but I am bound to warn you that there is but one way in which that wish can be fulfilled.

Why was there all this brightness about the death of Moses? Because of his genius? No. Because of his greatness? No. Because of his illustrious exploits? No. Because of any wealth he had amassed? Oh no, but because he was a servant of the Lord; and to share the holy triumph he experienced, you must be a servant of the Lord too. And do not, I beseech you, mistake the meaning of the phrase. Do not mistake correctness of creed for conversion, nor good desires for a new heart. To see that kingdom into which Moses was so triumphantly ushered, you must be born again. You must take Christ's yoke upon you, and bear His burden. You must renounce all self sufficiency, and trust in Him alone for salvation. But you know all this. It is rather needful that I ask if this be done with you. If Christ be not your Saviour, you are in peril to this very hour; if He be, all is well. If He be not, no wonder death to you is very awful. O Sinner, sleeping in your sins, awake to know your danger. You are out of Christ and unprepared to die. I charge you, ere the messenger arrives, that you flee to Him for mercy. Satan only mocks you with to-morrow, come to Christ to-day.

And for you, dear brethren, to whom Christ is precious, doubtless all is well. Follow Him closely and fully, and you shall fear no evil. You shall go at the right time, and in the right manner; some of you, perchance, with Pisgah triumphings, but all in peace. Sin shall cause no sorrow for it shall be all pardoned and put away. Satan shall brandish at you but an edgeless weapon; Death shall be a guide to immortality, the grave a robing chamber for the morning of the Resurrection, and all the Great Beyond a "far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory." Amen.

SERMON IV.

A NIGHT ON THE SEA OF GALILEE; OR, LESSONS FOR DISCIPLES.

"And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitude away," &c.—Matthew xiv., 22-27, 32 and 33.

IT is spring time in the land of Israel, and towards the close of the second year of our Lord's public ministry. He and his disciples now are on the north-eastern shore of the Lake of Galilee, and with them a great multitude of men, women and children. It seems as if in his own country the Prophet of Nazareth is beginning to have honour, for they have been hanging on his lips to-day as if with a strange hunger for the truth. He had thought of his disciples resting awhile in this comparatively desert country, but it has been impossible. The people no sooner knew that he was gone over the water than they came too, and to his tender heart they seemed like sheep without a shepherd, so he has blessed them all this day, healng both body and soul. And now the sunbeams slant from over the western uplands, reminding the disciples that it is time to send the multitude away. They come and tell the Saviour. He, having his own purposes, says, "They need not depart; give ye them to eat." Philip, in amaze, replies,—mentioning what seemed a great sum to him—that two hundred pennyworth of bread would not afford such a multitude even a morsel. Andrew says that there is a lad among them who has five barley loaves and two small fishes, but says it as if it were preposterous to mention such a thing. "Bring them hither to me" says the Saviour, "and make the men sit down." And they sat down, by hundreds and by fifties, more than five thousand of them, and in the hands of their Divine Entertainer the five barley

loaves and two small fishes became a plentiful repast for all. Nay, of the fragments that remained, the wondering disciples gathered twelve baskets full. And then there rose upon the minds of many there the strong conviction that this was indeed the Prophet they had so long been looking for; nay more, the all-conquering King that should free them from their foes, and they would lead him to his coronation. That must never be, the Saviour saw. It was not for this he came; so at once he constrained his disciples to embark, and go before him to Capernaum, while he dismissed the amazed and grateful, but mistaken, multitude. They departed to their homes, pondering the strange things they had that day witnessed: Jesus climbed the grassy side of some neighbouring mountain to speak with His Father alone, and the disciples sailed away toward Capernaum, to spend a whole night upon the water, that with its new, peculiar, and continued revelations of their Master's grace and glory would fitly follow in their experience the marvellous teachings of the day. Let us go with them, and try to learn the lessons, and catch the comfort of which this *night on the sea of Galilee*, to them, and to all the disciples of Jesus, is eloquent and full. We see first that

1.—*Their Master had chosen their way for them.*

It is the mark of discipleship this—the servant's will lost in the Master's. He is the ruler, we are the subjects. Supreme Lord of all by natural right, He has by right of redemption purchased for Himself a new and yet more delightful lordship to which all true disciples willingly bow. So He appoints our lot. He chooses our inheritance for us. He apportions to us our talents, and assigns us a place of labour, and to all who love Him fulfils the promise of the earlier scripture, "I will guide thee with mine eye." We are well content to have it so; content that by day or by night, on sea or on shore, for time and for eternity, He that died for us on Calvary should "constrain us" with the most absolute sovereignty, and exercise over us always and perfectly full control. But we notice again

2.—*That this chosen way was through the midst of difficulty.*

The next sight we have of the disciples is when they have got into the midst of the sea. Indeed, you cannot see them well, but if you strain your eyes you will presently

catch a glimpse of their small vessel, now up, now down, beset with waves that toss and tumble fiercely. There has come down upon the sea one of those great winds that often sweep from the sides of the surrounding mountains, and as in our own lake district, stir up no small commotion. The wind is dead against them, and if you listen when it lulls sometimes, you may hear the splash of their oars, for they have had to take to rowing, but have not got very far for all their pulling—twenty-five or thirty furlongs only. Thus fares it with the friends of Jesus—"tossed with waves," and hindered by a strong head-wind and "toiling in rowing." Ah, brethren, Gennesaret is not the only sea that has such sailors, nor are those Galilean hills the only ones adown whose slopes there sweep tempestuous winds. I have heard of sailors being at times in difficulty, who steer for a larger haven than Capernaum, and navigate a wider sea. I have heard them speak of gales of temptation blowing with hurricane fury for many a day together, dead calms of indolence, broken by sudden squalls of satanic passion. They have told me of the contrary winds of strife and calumny, of disappointment and of prejudice, of bigotry and persecution. I have listened as they told how they have been tossed on the waves of business difficulties and worldly anxiety, how they have been drenched by the chilling billows of unkindness and injustice, how they have been battered by the surges of bereavement, how their timbers have groaned beneath the onset of the waves of poverty and sickness, and how they have been rocked to an uneasy slumber on the waves of Laodicean ease. Did you ever hear such stories? Did you ever meet such mariners, or in all your voyagings come across such seas? "Tossing waves and contrary winds!" Is this like an epitome of any history you have known? Does it remind you of any incidents in your own career? In that as yet unwritten history of your own life, would this do as the heading of any of the chapters? "Tossing waves and contrary winds!" Is this often an experience of discipleship? Has it been your experience? Then the same measure is meted out to us that was to them. And is it not better so after all? Better thus than one perpetual calm. Perpetual calm, indeed! You have instances of that sometimes in autumn, when the great sea lies still, covered with a

sickly haze, and breaks in unpleasant monotone along the strand, when the very birds do cease their singing, and sit as if in reverie, when the trees stand as in a stupor, and drop their leaves with mechanical precision, when odours of decay and dying float on the stagnant air, and the sun through the damp dull vapour indolently smiles. And you have stormy times in winter when the north-easters rouse themselves. Storm upon the sea, when "deep calleth unto deep;" storm in the forest lands, where the aged oaks groan like gladiators in an agony of conflict; storm in the upper air, where the broken clouds fly and rush and scatter as if a thousand demons chased them! But which is the better nurse for strength and stature? Which fills the churchyards quicker? Which sends the blood the faster through the veins, and knits the muscles into closer unity? Which has made truer heroes, calm or storm? Each in its place is well, but we are not here for ease, but holiness. God does not want to pamper us into babyhood, but to train us into men; and for sinful souls this purpose is often best achieved by the ministry of suffering, for though

God hath marked out our way,

yet

When the sunbeams shine
Too oft our heedless feet would stray,
Earth's fading flowers to twine;

so

When to leave the track
Our hearts would wildly roam,
He sends a storm to drive us back
To Him, and heaven, and home.

3.—*We are reminded also how the disciples' difficulty is often protracted.*

It is the fourth watch of the night before any change comes to them for the better. All that time they toil in rowing. God's providence is a great mystery. That particular aspect of it which this narrative points at is a painful mystery; how, while some disciples seem breathed on by perpetual blessing, others are made the butt of fierce winds from beginning to end. One burden is scarcely lightened before another is imposed. The wound made by the heavenly Archer is scarcely healed, ere he fits another arrow to the string. Sickness follows sickness, grief treads upon the heels of grief, disappointment marches in the track of disappointment, and the soul of the believer is chastened all the way to heaven. Through the

four watches of this earthly night some believers toil in their spiritual rowing, and the winds are contrary to them almost until the "day break, and the shadows flee away." But we see

4.—*That the Master does not forget His disciples.*

We saw Him last in some secluded spot, on one of the mountains overlooking the lake, kneeling down to pray; nay, just as the shadows of the western hills grew long, and the evening mists rose up, we caught a glimpse of Him—alone—in that ineffable communion. But though His whole soul was given to this sacred mystery of petition, He had an eye and heart for His poor disciples too. St. Mark tells us that "He saw them" toiling. Take the comfort of it, sorrowing disciple! He that then saw, sees still. To that all-loving eye there is "nothing covered" of thy grief, "nothing" that disturbs thee that is "hid." When thine eyes fill with tears over the quiet face of thy departed friend, or when thou gazest mournfully upon the tomb where some Lazarus of thine affection slumbers, other eyes than thine are looking too. *He* sees thee! When the night of sorrow darkens upon thee, when unquiet hours are thy portion, when mortal sickness weighs thee down, and thou art almost fainting with the weight of some new calamity, alone as it seems to thee, in this sad winepress—thou art not alone. The familiar feet do not yet walk the waters to thy rescue, and the divine "Peace be with thee" has not yet, it may be, uttered its holy comfort, but He thou lovest is in thy near neighbourhood, and, "touched with the feeling of thine infirmities," *watches* with thee through the storm. And then

5.—*The Master came to them.* The wind was yet high—"a great wind" St. John calls it—and the sea wrought tempestuously, not unlike the day when Jonah fled to Tarshish, when the greater than Jonah came to his distressed disciples. It was not merely that He thought about them; He came and joined them. Let us not forget the manner of His coming. *It was in the storm.* Is this a prophecy for the after times, an acted parable for the instruction of them that should hereafter believe on Him? Verily the prophecy has not wanted fulfilment! Storms have arisen to His friends, as He had told them, but never one without the Saviour. That divine companionship

which is the true "glory of our brightest days," is also the "comfort of our nights." Nay, as the darkness has grown deeper round us, it has ever seemed to bring Him closer to us. Faithfullest of friends, Jesus loveth at all times, but, as it often seems to us, in the stormiest, most. It is certain that some of our most precious remembrances of Him are connected with times of struggle. We knew Him before, when all seemed favourable and made promise of perpetual summer, that is, we saw Him "through a glass, darkly," but it was when the sky grew black with clouds, when the winds of disaster began to blow, when the hail-stones of oppression and of insult, of slander and of mockery rattled wildest about our head, when the swelling tide of bereavement covered us, and when the waves of poverty and sickness, of blighted affection and disappointed hope the most rudely tossed us—it was in the *storm* of life that He came nighest to us, and then acquaintance ripened into oneness, and love rose into rapture, and we saw Him "face to face!"

But mark again how Jesus came to His disciples—ON *the sea.* Not in, or through, but *on* the sea. And mark the meaning, brethren. The sea is subject to Him. Without His high permission neither winds can blow, nor waves can roar. All power is His in heaven and on earth, and all things do obey Him. The pestilence that walketh in darkness halts when He shall bid it, and the destruction that wasteth at noonday stays its ravages at His command. Apart from His control, there can be no storm whatever. Think of it, disciple. The grief that presses thee to-day He knows, and watches, and controls. Lord of the waves around thee, He is overruling for thy benefit the tossing of the sea, and will presently bring forth from this commotion sweetest peace. Look not too closely at the crested billows; gaze not too long upon the scudding clouds. It will fright thee if thou lookest there. Oh, look above them, look beyond them, and through the mist and spray thou shalt see their Lord and thine advancing to thy rescue, planting His footsteps in the sea, and riding upon the storm.

And once more mark *the time when Jesus came; in the fourth watch of the night.* The vision of help often appears to tarry. Yet it is well to wait for it, for it will surely

come. The tarrying has a meaning in it. Those disciples have just been witnessing a marvellous display of Almighty power, and it may be a salutary discipline for them to be thus brought into contact with the stern realities of actual life. They are more likely to appreciate the help of their Master's presence when they most feel they need it. By this time they are weary with rowing; this contrary wind has tried them sorely, and perhaps they'll be glad of any help now, and so Jesus comes to them. Does He not love to make His disciples' extremity His opportunity? While they imagine they have strength remaining, He lingereth at a distance: but when their self-confidence is destroyed, He is there in a moment. And, moreover, where there is no self-confidence, other merciful purposes are often served by His tarrying. Faith and patience are tried with intent to strengthen them, and a bright example is often given of that thrice-honoured trust in God that against hope believes in hope. So take courage, thou whose trial has been longest on thee; Jesus may be only waiting for the fitting moment to greet thee. It may be His almighty footsteps are even now upon the waters, and though the night may seem to be blacker than ever about thee, perhaps in this *fourth* watch of thy trouble He may come to thee, in this "darkest hour that is just before the dawn." We notice

6.—*The disciples' trouble when they saw Him.*

Look with them, and see what they saw. It is a something one of them has had a glimpse of. He tells the others, and they all look. Is it a boat, a mast, a darker mass of water than ordinary, or merely a denser shadow on the sea? No, it is still there, and moves—moves towards them. Every eye is strained to see it. It draws nearer, and nearer, and still nearer, and then strange tremors seize them, and their faces whiten, and not a man of them moves his oar. And they gaze, and gaze, and gaze, while the strange vision glides majestically by; and then they cry out for fear; for yon moving figure is not flesh and blood they think; it must be a spirit wandering, perturbed and restless, over this unquiet sea! Then they didn't know their Saviour? No; and they have not been the only ones who have failed to recognize Him. The history of discipleship is full of similar instances. In the

night of earthly trial, when our experience is imperfect and faith is weak, we readily misunderstand the meaning of the things we see. We call that a calamity that is really a comfort; we think we shall be crushed by that which is meant to give us vigour; we call those fetters that are truly wings, and imagine we see disgrace and overthrow where God means power and praise. We speak of helps as if they were hindrances, of brotherly union as if it were conspiracy; we mistake friends for enemies, angelic minstrelsy for the clash and clangour of demoniac passion, and from the warm embrace of him who "*sticketh closer than a brother*," we shrink and tremble as if we had touched the dead! O sailors on stormy Galilee! we are men of like passions with yourselves. We, too, when through infirmity of faith our eyes are holden, often fail to recognize the Lord. His majestic treading of the waves moves us to an unworthy terror. We think Him terrible who is altogether lovely, and, instead of bursting into loud hosannahs at His coming, we cry out like you for fear! But we see again how

7.—*Their fears were banished.* The strange Being, treading so firmly on the unyielding sea, speaks. It is the familiar voice of him they left going up the mountain-side to pray. "Be of good cheer," it says to them, "it is I; be not afraid." St. Matthew and St. Mark notice how quick was His answer of comfort to their cry of fear. "Immediately," says the one, and "straightway" says the other, Jesus spake unto them. He knew the awful pressure of fear like this, when mortals gaze, or think they do, upon the unbodied dead, and He would remove it. For fear is not the most successful teacher. It may paralyze into dumbness and astonishment, but cannot strengthen unto prayer. Moses and the prophets know a readier way to the conscience, than "one who is risen from the dead," so *directly* Jesus spake unto them. Dear brethren, is He not touched with the feeling of our infirmities? Where others, freed, as they suppose, from the taint of this degrading terror, would have harshly chided with them, Jesus tenderly encourages. He cannot bear that they should shake and glower at him. Shaking enough, in this weary world, there will be for them without trembling before Him, so *immediately He spoke* to them. O great Consoler of fearful

hearts—this is what Thy people want to hear to-day! Dear brethren, listen amid the noise and din of earth's ten thousand voices, and see if you can hear it, this matchless lullaby for God's affrighted children. For He often walks the water now to say it to His own, and in their ears there is no music half so sweet as this. To know that on these threatening surges are the feet of my Divine Redeemer—to feel that not a trial ever comes to me, and not a sorrow ever wounds me, without His permission, that high above the waterfloods of grief there watches One who, for my sake, emptied Himself of His original glory and submitted to shame and spitting, the agony and curse of the cross, and to hear amid the roar of the elements His more than majestic "It is I;" this is my music amidst earth's harshest discords; this is the spell that scares away my flocking fears; this is my talisman against earth's cruellest wizardry—this glorious "It is I" of my Redeemer—this comforting Apocalypse of Jesus—this everlasting *Hush of God.*

In the thirty second verse we read that when he entered the ship

8.—*The wind ceased.* What was the meaning of this sudden lull? Was it a mere coincidence? Or does it speak to us of another calm that always comes where He comes? Was it a divine allegory which received interpretation in their own life? It does in ours. Two stormy scenes I see just now. God's own child is in the first, tossed on the waves of worldly sorrow. Furious are the gales that meet him, high tower the waves of woe, sharply through the straining cordage rattles the hail of desolation, deeply the vessel plunges in the brine, staggering is the shock as each wave dashes against her, and through the hiss of waters I can hear a distressful moaning, "All these things are against me;" "All thy waves and thy billows go over me;" "Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness;" "Thine arrows stick fast in me, and thine hand presseth me sore." So for a while; but when the Saviour comes into the ship, when faith sees the meaning of the mystery, and bows in submission at the feet of its Divine Lord, the purpose of the storm is achieved, and I see the sky is bright once more with laughing cloudlets. Gaily the sunbeams glitter on the sea, the tossing waters

sink away into gentle ripples, the whirling winds are hushed into a holy calm, and as the vessel glides away to her desired haven, I hear the sailors singing, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, and the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof;" for "the Lord of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge." "The wind ceased." But there is yet another ceasing. I think I see it now. Here, too, there is a storm, but he that is in it is not the Lord's. The sky is black with a strange darkness, lit up at times by lurid flashes. Sounds of wailing and of woe rise awfully upon the air. With faces of livid whiteness the affrighted mariners lie prostrate upon the deck, or cling in desperation to the slippery bulwarks. On comes the watery phalanx, whipped into madness by the gale; clear over the fated vessel sweep the furies of the sea, and when she rights a little I hear a groaning "God be merciful to me a sinner;" "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight;" "I acknowledge my transgression, and my sin is ever before me;" "Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me." And through that devouring tempest I see One coming to the ship whose head is crowned with thorns, and whose side is rent as if a spear had pierced it. I look again directly, and seem to be in another world. The faces of those storm-tossed mariners are radiant with joy. High in the glowing ether walks the sun, and to the glancing waves sends back responsive smiles; free in the quickening breezes float and fly the happy birds, and man and nature make harmonious music. Would you hear the singers? It is good to listen! For while the sympathizing earth is chanting "Blessed is the man whose iniquity is forgiven, and whose sin is covered," the pardoned penitent is singing in grateful tears

"O for a thousand tongues to sing
My great Redeemer's praise;
The glories of my God and King,
The triumphs of His grace.

He breaks the power of cancelled sin,
He sets the prisoner free;
His blood can make the foulest clean,
His blood avails for me."

"The wind ceased." Sinner, learn the meaning well. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." The storm of sin always ceases when Jesus comes into the ship—the heart. Let Him come into yours just now.

9.—*One word more—as to the result of all.* Hear those glad disciples as they crowd about their Master, and in humble adoration cry, "Thou art the Son of God." Out of trouble, peace; out of warfare, worship! This is the glorious design. Oh that it may be fulfilled in us! Oh let us cling to Jesus! then trial and trouble shall help us heavenward; griefs shall be turned to graces, and losses shall be gains; weights shall be wings, and sorrows shall be stepping-stones to glory; the stormful sea of human life shall help us to relish all the more the everlasting calm that's coming, and He that walks its tempestuous tides shall presently take us into His own unveiled presence, where the communion of Master and disciples shall never be interrupted, and in the sense of this stormy night on Galilee, "There shall be no more Sea!

SERMON V.

HIGHWAY AND HEDGE WORK.

"*And the Lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.*"—Luke xiv., 23.

MANY years ago now, a great feast was made in the comfortable home of one of the most respectable men of Galilee. It was on a Sabbath day that it was made, but who made it, and the precise name of the place where he lived, no one can tell now, yet it was one of the most remarkable feasts the world has ever known. A goodly number were invited, mainly as it seems from the families of the gentry in the neighbourhood, and the tables were spread with true oriental hospitality, but of the many who accepted the bidding of the host, the name of only one is preserved to us, and we are left to guess in vain what were the special honours and offices held by those who sat at meat with Him, and who evidently thought themselves, and were in general estimation held to be the "more honourable men." Nor is it of much consequence to have our wondering satisfied when we know who he was they met there, for all other names are insignificant by the side of that lowly stranger's, and every other incident of that feast is a trifle in comparison with this, that He who was both God and man sat down amidst the company, and joined in the festivities of that Sabbath day. They watched Him, we are told, and can well believe it. He presently gave them something to see. A man was before Him that had the dropsy, and Jesus "took him, and healed him, and let him go." He gave them something to listen to, as the records of this chapter abundantly prove. For some of those wise words that dropped from His sacred lips, we are indebted

to the unseemly attempts of some of the guests to secure the best places in the feast, and for some others to the host himself, whose manifest preferences for the great and wealthy gave occasion to our Lord to show to him and to all of us, in this matter of feast making, "a more excellent way." But we owe special thanks to another of that company—still unnamed—whose remark concerning the blessedness of eating bread in the kingdom of God, led the Saviour to answer him in the ever memorable parable of the Great Supper. For, under its thin veil of oriental imagery, lies, scarcely hidden, truth for all the world. We Westerns, scattered in the highways and hedges of the world, feel special interest in it, and mayhap have better understanding of it than they who heard it first. We know at least what is meant by its liberality of provision—salvation, great beyond all measure; and by the first bidding to its tables, definite but not wide. The general and insulting refusal of the bidden guests to come, and the servant's grieved complaint to his lord, are not hard to interpret. The swift enlargement of the original message, the prompt obedience of the willing messenger, his significant report that yet there was room, and then the still wider commission to "go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in," followed by the just decree "None of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper," have found their several illustration and fulfilment in the mysterious marches of that Providence whose latest and largest commission was, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

I dare not say so much for our practice of the duties taught in this parable. I fear we have been sadly laggard in this respect. The message of mercy has been carried by the Christian Church to the World, but slowly, feebly, and with hesitation, and perhaps we have been specially at fault as regards carrying it to the highways and hedges of the text. Something has certainly been done of late years in fulfilment of the command of the text, but more requires to be done, and that we may the better do it, let us spend a few moments in enquiry as to the sphere, design, method and agency of what the text teaches us to call the Highway and Hedge Work of the Church.

1.—We are to enquire *what is the sphere of work* indicated by the terms "highways and hedges."

No violence would be done to the spirit of the text if we took the words literally, and wherever highways and hedges were to be found, considered that the designed locality, but the words cover much more than this. They mean those places where men are farthest from the truth, those districts in which godliness has least hold, and holiness its fewest witnesses; where Satan has undisturbed dominion, and vice and wretchedness sway an unbroken sceptre; where ignorance puts on its most stolid stare, and superstition practices its darkest rites; where the earthly and sensual parts of our nature are exalted to highest dignity, and all that is good and godlike is trampled in the mire. They mean those parts where the light of the Gospel has never penetrated; where men still sit in sin, unchallenged by any herald of the cross, unstirred by the glad tidings of a Saviour's love; where the diseases of our moral nature have attained their fellest virulence, where no Gilead of mercy yields its precious balm, and where no Good Physician performs his miracles of grace. They mean those mighty tracts of country across whose desolate wastes the healthful breezes of true spiritual life never blow, and upon whose sterile plains the showers of revival never fall; the highways and hedges of the world where missionary labour has not yet commenced, and all things continue as they were from the beginning, cursed with the dead monotony of sin. And they have a meaning nearer home than that, in the highways and hedges of our own country. You know the locality—the rich woodlands where amidst the luscious beauty of copse and orchard, meadows deep with grass, and hedges all glorious with the blossom of the wild flowers, the agricultural labourer lives like a beast, a slave to labour and to sin, and dies in the dark. Or the bleak moors, dotted over with rough farmsteads, where father to son for generations have lived and died, thinking of little else than the quarterly rent day, and the weekly market in the distant town, knowing little more of God and holiness and heaven than the sheep they pastured amongst the heather, or the few cattle they kept in the stall. You know the locality. Highways and hedges are those hamlets and villages where gospel

ordinances have no existence, but idleness, ignorance, dirt and devilry have, and flourish. And they are those towns and cities where are sometimes long streets where scarcely a family can be found of which the father attends public worship on the Lord's day. I say, you know these places; these miserable streets, where whole families are crowded into one room—think of it, and all it means!—where the men are generally drunkards, and the women too sometimes: where for the most part the women are rough, coarse, and slatternly, with their native beauty blasted, their modesty slaughtered, and their grace and gentleness all gone, or worn and wasted with the cares and toils of their wretched life, beaten by a brutal husband, grieved by wayward children, the sport and scorn of the thriftless, shameless crowd outside, dragging out the few days of an unhappy life, and sinking unnoticed into the tomb. You know these places; where rags and tatters are the costly apparel, the glaring ginshop at the corner the place of banqueting, the low priced theatre and music hall, and such things as horse-racing, dog-racing, pigeon-flying and gambling of all kinds the innocent amusement; where old men mutter and mumble assent to what you say about God and truth and heaven, but never stir to seek it, or else blaspheme, as only old men can; where the young men learn to drink, and swear, and lie, and steal; where the merest children pour out vilest ribaldry, and the little ones of all weep and wail for very wretchedness, and die off by scores for the ignorance, and carelessness, and cruelty, and neglect they meet with.

I say, you know these places. I would to God you did not, and that such descriptions were only true of times and places long forgotten. I would to God that tales like these sounded to us all like fragments of old world history, and evoked only loud Hallelujahs that such times and such people had passed away for ever, but alas! they are only too true of to-day. Nor think, brethren, that such views as these are too gloomy. The picture I have drawn for you is lightly coloured in comparison with the absolute truth. There are deeper depths than these in the world's iniquity. There are sadder sights even than these, and yet keener sorrows. It is well we do not know them all. Life were impossible if we did. If we could see what the All-seeing

One beholds for one day, and could watch the working of the curse, if we could see the ignorance and profanity, the sloth and pride, the haughtiness and cruelty, the grovelling animalism and shameless impurity, the smiting of the fair face of Right, and the yelling honours with which they crown the Barabbas of Iniquity; if we could know how innocence is corrupted, and kindness hardened, trustfulness deceived, and virtue outraged; if we knew the bitterness of sin's poverty, the loathsomeness and pangs and agonies of sin's diseases; and could see how Satan lays his accursed hand upon the guileless innocence of childhood, wrings many a tear from the eyes of infancy, brings to utter wreckage the gladsomeness and buoyancy and hopes of youth, makes manhood brutish and the grey hairs of reverend age a monument of shame, and could listen to the weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth which, from many a hell on earth, go up into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth; if we could know all the sin and sorrow of the Highways and Hedges of Humanity, I verily believe that we should go mad or die!

If this be the sphere of operations,

II.—*What is the design* of this Highway and Hedge work?

Its general tenor we easily comprehend to be one of blessing. Two points stand out in it worthy of notice: the first

1.—Each man saved. Nothing less than this will do, and nothing less than this is implied in getting them to come in to the supper. To get them to adopt cleaner habits, or follow healthier rules of living will be a great achievement, but we must aim higher than that. To induce them to forsake their godless practices, and become regular attendants at the Lord's house will be a great gain, but we must compass a loftier end than this. To persuade them to take upon themselves a profession of religion and openly consort with the godly, would be a worthy enterprise, but we hold a yet more blessed commission—we must make them Christians. Thank God, we have something to invite them to. For their want we may offer them plenty, for their disappointment satisfaction, for their disquietude comfort. For frivolous amusements we have substantial joy, for temporary excitement continual happiness, and for pleasure peace. For the restlessness of vice we have the

calm stability of virtue, for the mocking sophistries of a false philosophy we have the firm foundations of the everlasting gospel, for the poisonous dainties of an earthly and sensual infidelity we have the healthful luxury and abiding comfort of salvation by the remission of sins. So we must get them to come in, if we can. There is something to come to.

2.—But there is a yet further purpose to be achieved—"that my house may be filled." Is not this like saying in another way "that He may see of the travail of His soul and may be satisfied?" The full house, the accomplished purpose of Redemption, the world enlightened and saved, are three things, but "these three are one." The thought is great, and beneath its burden we are apt to stagger sometimes. 'Tis a vision that tarrieth, and to some of the dim-sighted seers of our time, it seems as if it would never come, but come it shall at length. The messengers of the Lord shall not be ever crying, "Who hath believed our report, and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?" Wide credence shall that message gain, and great shall be the company of the faithful. The world shall not for ever lie in the arms of the Wicked One; Humanity shall not be ever his lawful captive. Sin shall not always lord it over the hills and valleys of this lower earth. A better day approaches, a happier time; a time when the cheatery of evil shall be clearly seen, and its miserable bondage broken; when the subtleties of sin shall be universally exposed, and its fierce attack resisted; when the way of sinners shall be counted evil, the counsel of the ungodly a mischievous device, and the seat of the scornful a halting place in the march to death; when the oracles of truth shall supplant the flippant folly of a God-forgetting literature; when the Sabbath shall be no more a weariness, and the service of the Saviour shall be no more a drudgery; when the preaching of the cross shall be universally the power of God unto salvation, and the lifted Saviour shall draw all men unto Him; a time when business shall not mean trickery, nor leisure laziness, nor liberty license, nor thrift greed; when amusements shall be no more frivolous nor labour slavish, nor manners insolent, nor customs cruel, but men shall be pure and true, brave with the courage of a good conscience, steadfast

with an unwavering faith, full of love to God and love to one another, glad with the joy of pardon and the blessedness of perpetual peace, filled with the grace of patience, and the meekness and gentleness of Christ, glowing with the goodness of a regenerated nature, showing forth the fidelity that is approved of God, and that far-reaching temperance that is begotten of abiding trust; and thus bringing forth these fruits of the Spirit, against which no upbraiding conscience testifies, and thunders no violated law, "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

III.—*By what means is this to be brought about?*

"Go out . . . . and compel them to come in" is the answer.

1.—*They cannot come without an invitation.* An invitation should not be an insult. Those who haunt the highways and hedges of life have some self respect left, and are quick to resent anything like disrespect. They are human beings, and cannot be driven to church like a lot of cattle. They have usually penetration enough to know when anything of this kind is comtemplated. If they come, they will *come*, and will not be dragged and threatened and hectored into it. Whoever goes out to bid them must not go with a "stand off" air about him, or a patronizing manner, or think to scold them into Christianity, or imagine that his message gives him the right to pry into their family affairs, or advise in their family difficulties, or enter into their house at any time whether convenient or not. He must go as the bearer of an invitation from Jesus, and must take that in the gentlest, wisest and most loving manner he can.

2.—*Personal contact with the outcasts is needful.*

Men can vote sometimes by proxy, but cannot visit by proxy. Printed appeals are not so telling as personal solicitations. Men like to be spoken to. One kind word will often go further than a score of tracts. Fifty hand-bills will often do not half the execution of one hand-shake, heartily given, and lovingly meant. Of course personal contact is not possible or indeed advisable for everyone of the Lord's people, and in such case let hand-bills or tracts be scattered rather than nothing, but do not let us forget that paper and printing are at best but a poor substitute

for that personal pleading and brotherly sympathy, of which the servant in our text is an illustration, and our blessed Master himself the highest and best embodiment. Nor let us forget that the command of the text authorizes

3.—*A holy violence:* "Compel them to come in."

It is almost too late in the day to set about proving that physical violence is not what Jesus means here. We have happily got beyond that stage in our study of moral philosophy. We hardly need to be taught that conversions by physical force are valueless, and no conversions at all. Men that take upon themselves a profession of religion, or pronounce some ecclesiastical Shibboleth, because angry Ephraimites are standing by with drawn swords to make them, are of no service to any church. And those who think to make men religious by the compulsion of bribery, or the compulsion of fear, who glory over large congregations gathered by the soft seductions of Christmas blankets, or parish charity, or good employment, or by the harsher logic of threats of withdrawal of custom from the shop, or children from the school, or ejectment from the homestead, need to be reminded that what Jesus wants is not to get men to learn a catechism, or behave well during the hours of service, but to love God and bring forth fruits of righteousness; not to see so many seats full of decently dressed people, but so many souls full of light and life and power and holiness; and you cannot bring this about by such coarse contrivances as these. Thumb-screws and red hot irons may extort cries of agony, but not the cry of penitence. It's a poor morality that is only moral while it hears the headsman sharpening his axe! It's a wretched righteousness that is only righteous as long as it can get something for it! No! It is quite another violence that Jesus means. It is such violence as is begotten of pity, and nursed by prayer, such as men would put upon their fellows if they saw them struggling in the waters, and knew that a rope flung out to them was their only means of escape. It is as if He said "Ask them to come in. If they refuse, ask them again, and yet again, and tell them I sent you, and if they still refuse, plead with them to listen. Choose the fittest time for urging them, employ the likeliest arguments. Think of the husks and beggary of sin, and compel them; think of the bondage and misery in which

they are, and compel them; think of all they *might* be, *may* be, and perhaps *will* be, and compel them; think of eternal death, and compel them; think of everlasting life, and compel them; and then ask, invite, urge, press, plead, beseech, entreat, pray over and pray for them, go again and again, weep over them, lay holy hands on them, make them see you love them, whisper your message, or thunder it, draw them, or drive them, lead them, or carry them, bring them by degrees, or bring them at once, bring them sighing, or bring them singing, but bring them to themselves, to the sanctuary, to salvation, to Me, and however they may oppose and refuse you, never give up heart or hope of them—*till I do!* Compel them to come in!"

IV.—*Who are to do this work?* Shall we say

1.—*Those who are now doing it.* Who could call them off from so high an enterprise, or appoint them a nobler work? But how few the workers! Here and there you find them, lights in the surrounding darkness! No one would be taxed with counting them, the number is soon told. How many are there from this chapel, how many out of this congregation? Put them together, these harvestmen of God, and when you see how great the harvest is, and how far and wide the fields stand ready for the reapers, how sorrowfully comes that old Scripture home to you, "but the labourers are few."

2.—*But who can do it?* More indeed than make the attempt.

There is a mine of vast wealth among us, all unworked. We have resources available for such toil as this that we have hardly dreamt of. There are men of energy among us, men of action, men of the ready hand and the eloquent tongue, men too of tact and perseverance, men of information and of leisure, who have not yet entered into this field, and who could do admirable work for Christ. There are godly women with us too, to whom these highways and hedges offer a fair field for work. Ability? Yes, we have ability. We manage large businesses, we control great factories, we can guide influential associations, we can argue with conclusiveness, speak with propriety and force, write elegantly and instructively; we can counsel in perplexity, encourage in times of feebleness, we can organize and carry out all sorts of things; we can plan and scheme and

order and alter; indeed there are few things that we cannot do. Why might not this surplusage of talent be put to good account? Why might not those who are such apt workmen in things temporal rise to an equal eminence as to the things eternal? May I ask again, who can do it? And then

3.—*Who ought to do it?* Let us look at this in the light of the Great Day. Will it not be said to some in that day, "I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me:" and to their modest disclaimer of so high a ministry, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me?" But who, brethren, are these? Are they those who kept to themselves the grace of Christ Jesus, and never tried to spread it: those who were contented with a decorous and regular attendance on the services of the sanctuary, and a more or less liberal support of the cause of God? What will be said to such—I mean the christian men who worked side by side with sinners, and never opened their lips to them about salvation; who lived in the midst of a godless population, and never tried to turn them from the error of their way; who had ungodly workpeople, and never warned them, ungodly apprentices, wicked neighbours, unconverted relatives, irreligious acquaintances, and never breathed a word to them of their danger, and tried to save them? Will Jesus say "Well done" to such! Perhaps some of these would have perished in spite of all our efforts, but what if we made no effort? Will it not be asked of us how it was that we let these precious souls glide by us to destruction; how it was that we could view all this wreck and ruin, and never try to build it up again; how it was that we could see these poor misguided beings hurry past us to the deep darkness of perdition, and yet stretch out no hand to save them, and lift up no voice to stop them? And if such sluggishness can yet be forgiven, and we are saved ourselves from the final doom of the accursed, does it not seem as if our place there must be far less honourable, and our crown far less brilliant, than theirs to whom our Lord, as He reviews their loyal and brotherly efforts to save men from sin, will say,

"Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did unto me."

Yes, it shall be even so, for there are degrees in glory. We shall not all stand upon one level there; let no one think it! All who enter Heaven shall be happy, but some shall quaff a sweeter cup than others. All shall be honourable, but some shall be advanced to higher dignity. All will hear the Master's welcome, but there are some to whom He will say "Well done" with greater emphasis. All shall behold His glory, and shall walk with Him in white apparel, but some shall be nearer the throne than others, and shall robe themselves in more magnificent attire. Brethren, let us try to join this selecter company, let us aim to grasp these higher honours. Let us remember that they who were most like to Christ on earth, shall be nearest Him in heaven. Let us copy His high example; let us follow His godlike footsteps; let us aim, like Him, to make this dark world lighter, and this sorrowful heart of humanity glad; let us try to lift some poor soul out of the pit, to free some slave of Satan from his fetters, to snatch some brand out of the everlasting burning, that we may have some sheaf to show in that great harvesting, some soul blessed by our efforts, some sinner saved through our instrumentality; and in the day of His coming, when the noise and bustle of the world are stilled, and its frantic labours are over; when the trophies of battle are forgotten, and few and small appear its vaunted triumphs of science and of art; when the garlands of its fame have faded, and the honours of its greatness have withered away; when gold is no more riches, and broad acres are no inheritance, and royal diadems are no longer crowns; they that were thus "wise, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turned many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever!"

SERMON VI.

BUYING THE TRUTH.

"*Buy the truth.*"—Proverbs xxiii, 23.

THIS Scripture reminds me that there is a certain valuable commodity just now in the market, and I am to bid you to become the purchasers. Perhaps I shall best do so by

1.—*Reminding you what that commodity is.*

I say reminding you, because I more than suspect that you have heard of it before, and indeed that it has been offered for sale in this very place again and again. But a good thing does not suffer by having its excellencies spoken of even many times over, and this is a very good thing, so I have no hesitation in speaking of it even at length. Let me say then, to begin with, that no one must be stumbled by the sound of its name—the Truth. That may not at first hearing seem to be of a very practical and substantial nature. To some it may appear not substantial at all, and it may be admitted that when on the one side you are talking of buying the truth, and on the other of buying shops and houses, ships and farms, cattle and estates, it does seem as if the former transaction were rather more in the region of sentiment and theory than the other. Multitudes of men can understand easily enough what it is to pay gold or notes, and carry away goods, but truth buying sounds shadowy and unreal to them. But that is a mistake. The truth I speak of is a most real thing, and the purchase I want you to make is one of the most practical transactions that you have ever engaged in in your life. For surely those are not the only real things in this world that you see and touch and taste and handle. What more real and practical agent in secular affairs is there than the human spirit? That is as absolutely a fact as clouds and

rocks and rivers and hills and seas are facts, but who of us ever saw a human spirit, heard a human spirit, felt a human spirit? And there may be many things a man may do, most deeply practical, most powerfully influential on human affairs, but with no outward appearance whatever. If a man goes into the market, and, giving a cheque for a thousand pounds, takes home with him a thousand pounds' worth of cotton or corn, do you say that is something practical and real, that the man has done something? No doubt he has, but is that the only class of actions you will so speak of? Look at the thief upon the cross. When he lurked in the robber fastnesses of Judea, and, stripping travellers of their valuables, alternately feasted like a prince, or starved like a beggar, he did what was real and tangible enough, but was not that a real thing he did when, naked and helpless, bleeding and faint, he turned to the Sufferer at his side, and said "Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom?" All his violence and shouting and blows had done had been at times to put some money in his purse, but those few quiet words had opened the gates of Paradise. Saul of Tarsus was engaged in a most sorrowfully practical business when he stood by the clothes of the witnesses who were stoning Stephen, and anyone who had seen the cavalcade he led from Jerusalem to Damascus, and the letters he was carrying from the high priest, and had heard his fierce and bitter language as he urged his companions along the dusty way, would have said that that was a very practical business too, but was it not equally so when he lay for three days in the house of Judas in the street called Straight, and neither did eat nor drink? What came of those three days you know: Christ's chiefest apostle was born out of that silence, and unnumbered millions have had cause to glorify God in Paul. But what was there to see and hear while the great question of obedience to the heavenly vision was being settled? Children who chaffered in the market place about mint or anise would have made far more noise than you could have heard in that house of Judas. The quietest fisher on the banks of the Abana would have been more apparently active than was Saul of Tarsus then. And that which Saul gained then, which sent him out into the world a totally different man, upon an entirely different course, who saw

it; who handled it; who heard it; who tasted it? Tried by those tests it was nothing. A yard of silk purchased in the bazaar of Damascus was a much more real thing. A bunch of flowers gathered from the gardens of the city was a much more valuable possession. But I should insult your understanding if I were to ask whether you really thought so. What Paul then gained was this very Truth that I have to offer to you now, and you may judge from what it did in him and for him, how practical the whole transaction was. And indeed, perhaps that is the best way of showing what the thing is, to show you what it does. What can we learn of electricity in any other way? You cannot see it, at least ordinarily; you cannot cut it, or carve it, or weigh it, or hear it, or smell it, but you know its effects. One of these electrical machines is a very unpretending affair. It is only made of wood, brass, iron and a little copper and silk—to all appearance. Some one turns the handle; you hear the ticking of the contact breaker—that is all. You take up one of the metal conductors. What then? You feel nothing. Electricity for anything you know is nothing. That handle might as well be made of paper or wood for anything it does to you. They call this an electrical machine? Then so far you can pooh, pooh it. But take up the other conductor in your other hand. Now let the handle be turned. You hear the clicking again, but you feel this time—as if every nerve in your body was quivering. After that you will no more call electricity an unpractical thing. And you hear men speak of Truth, and buying Truth, and perhaps it seems to you a shadowy and unreal thing altogether, but see what this Truth can do for those who have it, and you will no more think so about it.

Abel bought the Truth, and offered by means of it a more excellent sacrifice than Cain. Enoch bought it, and lived a life of blameless beauty for three hundred years. Noah bought it, and floated in safety on the raging waters that drowned the world. Abraham bought it, and walked, and talked with angels in broad day. Jacob bought it, and changed his name of shameful weakness for a name of princely power. Moses bought it, and He who made him talked with him as a man talketh with his friend. Joshua bought it, and led the hosts of Israel in triumph into Canaan. David bought it, and straightway Music became

handmaid unto Piety, and Holiness walked side by side with Song. Daniel bought it, and found the lions of the den no worse than lambs that gambolled in the sheepfold. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego bought it, and walked in the seventimes heated furnace as if it had been one of the glades of Eden in the cool of the day. John the Baptist bought it, and woke a slumbering nation into feverish zeal. Saul of Tarsus bought it, and preached of the malefactor of Calvary before the lord of Rome. The martyrs of the early church bought it, and took joyfully the spoiling of their goods; counted the rags of their poverty for Christ's sake, as if they had been robes of imperial purple; sang praises in their prisons, and went to their death as if they had been going to a bridal. And all through the ages since, men and women have bought the Truth, and found in it strength for their feebleness, light for their darkness comfort for their sorrow, and hope for their despair. They buy it still, and find it smooths their difficulties, overcomes their enemies, masters their evil passions, gives stability for their fickleness, gentleness for their violence, kindness for their cruelty, generosity for their selfishness, uprightness for their fraud. They buy it still, and find it guides them in perplexity, gives them patience under sufferings, smooths the pillows on the couch of sickness, pours a balm into the wounds of bereavement, presses a chalice of immortal gladness to the lips of the dying, lights up the gloom of the sepulchre with an unearthly radiance, and so completely robs death of its terrors, that it often seems as if the chamber where the good man dies was almost within the verge of Heaven, and that just a little further, and even mortal ears might listen to the music of the angels, and mortal eyes might catch through the never shutting gates the glory of the streets of gold.

After thus giving you some idea of what this Truth is, I will

II.—*Remind you of what it costs to buy it.*

For this also, if I mistake not, has been spoken of in this place before. Of course, it will cost you something. That may be set down as certain, and also reasonable. Perhaps most of those things that to us are the choicest have had to be paid for in one way or another. We shall also have to pay for the Truth, though it may be not in actual gold

and silver. But I am happy to be able to say that the price, fixed by Him who has the right to do it, is within the reach of all. You might possibly have supposed, from the great and marvellous excellencies already said to be connected with it, that its price would be proportionately great, and that when in addition to being good for one side of a man's nature, it is said to be good for all sides, and in all seasons, good in health and good in sickness, good in life and good in death, it could only be obtained for a ruinous consideration, but it is not so. Now if I had to offer for sale one of Turner's pictures, or one of Wedgwood's choicest vases, I should have to ask a sum that some of you could not by any means command. A real Elzevir would be quite beyond many of you. While if you come to more practically useful things, suppose it was a steamship for sale, some of you might buy it, but if it was an acre of land in the heart of London, any man should be well off who could afford to purchase that. But this Truth—more valuable than all the pictures that Turner, or Landseer, or Reynolds, or Gainsborough ever painted; worth more than all the ware that Staffordshire could produce through a cycle of centuries, worth more than all the books ever bound in vellum, worth more than a whole navy of steamships or all London put together—this Truth, I say, can be purchased at a price that will not distress the poorest person in this place, and that the beggar in the street, shambling along in rags and tatters, could yet afford to pay. For in the market where this is sold there is another currency than that that bears the image and superscription of Queen Victoria, and men and women who can hardly do anything upon the Exchange at Bradford, or Liverpool, or Manchester can become great merchants here. For everyone of us has a heart to part with, and, in the estimation of Him who rules this holier trafficking, that heart is more valuable than all the guineas that ever jingled upon bankers' tables. *That* is the gold indeed of this diviner bartering, and if a man is content to part with it, the Lord who governs all things is more than content that he should have the Truth in exchange. That is, if we on our part are willing to give our heart, that is ourself, into His hands, He on His part will put into ours this invaluable commodity which will be our fortune in

life, our triumph in death, and our incorruptible inheritance through all eternity.

One caution I am commanded to interpose here. The price demanded is a heart, not a part but the whole of it, and if anything less than all the heart is offered, business cannot be done. I am commanded moreover to say, that we are not to suppose, from the way in which the transfer takes place, that our poor guilty restless hearts have this value intrinsically and of themselves, but that it so pleases Him, of His boundless grace, to regard them, and that the whole transaction is of grace and not of debt. Nevertheless I have also to say, when we perform our part of the contract, He holds Himself bound in holy faithfulness to fulfil His. Now, brethren, the price is before you of this inestimable blessing, *True Religion*, and that there may be no possible mistake about it, I am commissioned to say to you in the plainest terms, if you will give your heart to God, you shall have it. And whatever of self denial now, or of self sacrifice hereafter, may be involved in this, let this be remembered, that to refuse to buy will, in the long run, cost you infinitely more. It may seem much to give—all the heart—but it is one of those cases in which giving does not impoverish, and witholding does not enrich. And it is not to be forgotten that the payment of this price lies more easily upon the men of to-day, than on their fathers. Christ indeed has never asked less than all the heart, but to give that heart when Religion is fêted and honoured, is a different thing from giving it when Religion is persecuted. It means self denial still, it means bearing the cross after the Master, it means some measure of obloquy and contempt, but it does not mean, and cannot mean, what it did in the fiery days that are past. Therefore let no man be discouraged upon that account. We can pay the price, I will not say easily, but by the grace of God, we *can* pay it; and if the payment meant a living martyrdom, even at such a price the Truth were cheaply purchased, because the suffering will only be for a little while, but the glory that shall follow is to be for ever, and for *ever*, and FOR EVER!

And now a word or two as to

III.—*Where and how it may be obtained.*

The thing itself you know, the price you know; where

can this question be settled? If you wanted to buy cotton, you would go to Liverpool; if you wanted to buy corn, perhaps to Hull or Leeds; if you wanted to buy cattle, to Wakefield or Newcastle. Where must you go to buy Truth? Why, thank God, there's no special need to go anywhere in particular. There is a market established for that very near to every man's door. There are certainly some places where you wouldn't be very likely to get it. For instance; you would scarcely expect to get it in the spirit shops and beer houses of this country. It is not absolutely impossible, but a most unlikely thing. The ordinary bar-room is not often the scene of a man's conversion. Nor is the theatre the place to seek it in. It might be found there once in a hundred years perhaps, but it is more likely to be lost than found there. Nor is the public ball-room the place to find it. Waltz music and full dress are not favourable to a man's making his peace with God. And some of the places of entertainment of the time are not likely places to find it in; and you would certainly not advise a seeker to go to the race course after it. The fact is, while no place in particular can be said to be set apart for its sale, there are some places where it is extremely unlikely that you will find it, and common sense would say, don't go there if you really want it. Now there are others where a man is likely to come upon it. Wherever God is worshipped, or Christ is honoured, or His word is read, or His gospel is preached, or men meet together to further the interests of His kingdom, these are likely places to buy the Truth in, but indeed it comes to this, that *Wherever* a man may be who feels his need of mercy, and longs to get it, who knows he is a sinner, and is in earnest to be saved from his sins, *that's* the place where he may buy the Truth! And if any of you are in that condition just now, this is the place and this is the time, when you may strike the bargain, and be rich for ever! For He who sells the Truth is not confined to places, but wherever you are who want it, there is He to give it. Yes! there is a personal transaction between you and a personal Saviour, and there must be no mistake about this. Jesus sells the Truth; His servants only publish the terms of the traffic. Jesus sells it, and if you want it, you must go direct to Him. Don't be misled about this.

No one can put it into your hands but the Lord Himself. Churches and chapels and creeds and systems and meetings and ministers at the best are only His agents, channels of communication, but they have no power of transferring to any man that glorious reality here called the Truth. They can speak of it, and point to it, and rejoice in it, but if any man wants it, he himself must go right to Jesus, and going thus—though he can only bring a restless burdened guilty soul, and though when he asks for Truth, he really pleads for pardon—going thus with a price which is not gold, to buy what is not purchaseable, he shall in no wise be cast out.

And now, dear brethren, I think the way is surely clear for us to do business at once. I appeal to you who have not purchased this inestimable blessing to buy to-day. Whatever else you have in your home or in your heart, if you have not this, you are to this moment poor. Whatever else you have purchased there remains yet the best bargain of your life. Did you never see it? What are all the things that fill your wardrobes, or lie upon your shelves, or line your walls, or stand upon your sideboards, or heap your counters, or crowd your warehouses, or are kept in your safes? Property, do you say? How much good do you get from them? Men that never paid one penny towards them, have got more pleasure out of some of them, than you who have toiled and moiled for years to call them your own. The field is yours? The little children who lie among its cowslips, and gather its daisies, enjoy that field more than you. The estate yours? Why the lads that clamber on its fences, the artists that come and sketch its trees, the stray traveller who catches the sunset purples among its woods, and goes home with a memory for ever, enjoy that more than you. And what if in common talk it is yours to-day, whose would it be to-morrow, if you should die before the morning? Which of all these things could you carry with you across the river? Will any of these bank notes rustle, think you, in the other world? Will any of these jewels flash upon your person in that society? Nay, even here, what use will the larger part of these things be to you when you come to die? Does some one answer, no one expects them to be of much use then? No, that is just it; these become valueless and

other things are wanted that you will have to supply—this one thing above all others that I want you to buy to-day. How will you get it then? There have been those who, in that dread hour of the Bridegroom's coming, have awoke from their sinful slumber to find amid the darkness that there was no oil in the vessel, and, going in fear and trembling to them that sell, have come back again to find the Bridegroom was gone in to the marriage, and the door was shut. What guarantee have you that it shall not be so with you? Oh! buy it now you have the chance, that when you want it most, you may find it there to support and strengthen, and take it with you to be your joy and crown throughout Eternity, "I should like," is not sufficient in this enterprise; it must be, "I will." Not "I will to-morrow," but by the grace of God, "I will to-day." You that seek it thus, shall find it, or rather seeking Him who is Himself the Truth and in, and from, and of whom all truth is, in knowledge of whom standeth our eternal life, you shall find Him; and having Him within your heart—"Christ in you, the hope of glory"—you shall have the choicest treasure that this world can give you; you shall be wealthy while you live, although the world may call you poor; you shall be royally attended when you die, although the dying couch were nothing better than the straw, and you shall walk and talk with God's Kings and Princes—nay, with the King Himself—in the city that has no need of the Sun for ever, and *for ever*, and FOR EVER!

SERMON VII.

KEEPING THE TRUTH.

"*Buy the truth, and sell it not.*"—Proverbs xxiii, 23.

IT is the latter part of this Scripture that I have now to speak of. Some of you may remember that, on a former occasion, I exhorted you to buy the Truth. I have now to urge you, having bought, not to sell it. There will be no need to remind you that the passage was interpreted in the spirit of New Testament teaching, and that the Truth was taken to be in a general sense what we mean when we speak of True Religion. The fact that all truth is truth in Jesus, and that everyone that is of the truth heareth His voice, not merely permits but makes necessary, at least to the men of our time, such an interpretation. Of course it will be understood that, as the buying here spoken of was only like a purchaser, so this selling is only like a sale. This being supposed, then the way is open for me to say to all of you who have bought the Truth; *Don't sell it!*

Does anyone answer, Why? Because

I.—A very slight knowledge of the subject would say that this is not a thing to be parted with.

A man doesn't need to be a theologian, or indeed a disciple of Christ, in order to see this. Catechism knowledge would assure us that true religion is not a thing to be bought one day and sold the next. If it is worth anything, it is worth keeping. Everybody feels that this is one of those things a man is bound to go through with, and that if there is the slightest modicum of Truth in what is said about its excellency, it is not a thing to be given up after being once gained. At least every one

will feel that if it is to be parted with, there ought to be good and valid reasons for doing so, for we all know that whatever else it is, it is no trifling matter, and if a man ever acts wisely and thoughtfully about anything, it ought to be about this. Of course, a popular impression might be a popular fallacy, you must not lay too much stress upon it, but there it is with respect to this, and wise men will at least pause before they decide to run exactly counter to it. But

II.—*Observation of those who sold it says just the same, that it should not be parted with.* This is a species of evidence particularly painful to sift, but salutary to those who will do it. Just as when you see men come back from their fortnight's splashing in the sea water, or climbing amongst the hills, all brown, and bronzed, and vigorous, and healthy, you say to yourself, "now that is what would be good for me also, what they have had, where they have been," so when you watch the spirit and temper and deeds of any who are backsliders from the holy commandment, you say, "what has damaged them would damage me." For they are damaged, and that seriously, to all but eyes that do not care to see. It would not be difficult to adduce specific and personal testimony to this, but general observation of the whole case leads to the same conclusion, and perhaps more safely. An individual case might deceive us, but inference based upon multitudes of cases is likely to be safe. It would scarcely be prudent to infer from what you might see or hear in one public house, that the tendency of the liquor traffic was rather towards harm than good, but when the same consequences occur over and over again all over England, your inference may be strongly held. You judge of the tendency of horse racing in the same way. Anyone who watches the crowds that throng the course, and listens to the talk that is going on, and takes notice of the condition of the town in the evening afterwards, will have a pretty good idea as to which way it all points. I suppose most people will feel that to speak of a prayer meeting and the Derby day in the same breath is altogether incongruous. I imagine few people ever think of kneeling down before they go, and asking God's blessing on the proceedings of the day. Everybody will feel that it would be a solemn mockery.

Yet wherefore, except that the general tendency of the thing as now managed in this country is felt to be towards evil? Why ought prayer and amusement to be incongruous? Have we any right to do a single thing we cannot ask the Divine blessing upon? But we are passing from the point in hand, how to judge of the general tendency of any action, or class of actions. By the same process of induction it may be fearlessly asserted, that in the direction of selling the Truth, there is nothing to encourage anyone to follow, but everything to discourage, and that if generosity, industry, integrity, kindness, unselfishness, sympathy, gentleness, firmness, patience, meekness, cheerfulness, love, are at all to be desired, it is not there we shall be likely either to find them, or to have them nourished when they are found. But one may speak more plainly still, and say that if you want to stifle and strangle everything about a man that is noble and of good report, you can hardly do it better than by persuading him to sell the Truth. Besides

III.—*It is such a good thing now*, therefore don't sell it.

About this there is not the slightest doubt. Experience speaks, and speaks loudly, to have the Truth is to have a precious treasure. It is so, is it not? Let us examine for a moment. What have we, in having this? First, peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins; we are no more servants, but sons, and because we are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying Abba, Father. We have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but the Spirit of Adoption. There is therefore now no condemnation to us who are in Christ Jesus. Our conscience is at rest, for Christ has hushed its trembling. Our fears are banished, for He hath given us the spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. But let Charles Wesley tell us what we have, in having the Truth:

"Thy mighty name salvation is,
And keeps my happy soul above;
Comfort it brings, and power, and peace,
And joy, and everlasting love;
To me, with Thy dear name, are given
Pardon, and holiness, and heaven.

Jesu, my all in all Thou art,
My rest in toil, my ease in pain,
The medicine of my broken heart,
In war my peace. in loss my gain,
My smile beneath the tyrant's frown,
In shame my glory and my crown.

In want my plentiful supply,
In weakness my almighty power,
In bonds my perfect liberty,
My light in Satan's darkest hour,
In grief my joy unspeakable,
My life in death, my heaven in hell."

Surely, brethren, you are not going to part with a treasure that has all this in it. Some things that men possess are not so valuable now, but they are going to be, by and by, if men will only keep them, but this *is* valuable to-day. It has a present comfort in it, a blessing already. There is no need to wait for some revelation that will show us what a treasure we have gained—that we know now without waiting. Let us keep it now we have got it; by the grace of God. And moreover

IV.—*It is going to be more valuable presently.* Some things grow worse instead of better if you keep them. Familiarity breeds a species of contempt for them. And even those things that are incontestably valuable come to be largely discounted in value as years roll over us. The finest picture that was ever painted will grow dim, if you'll keep it. Tarnish gathers on the choicest gold. A vapoury dullness will come to the most perfect object glass that was ever pointed to the stars. The horse that steps so majestically now, will tread in another fashion fifteen years from now, The house you take such pride in to-day will have brought in many a bill for repairs by the time it is fifty years old. The eighty guinea piano will have got into the hands of the broker long before that time is out. Some things grow worse instead of better. Some of you would give a good deal now to have the opportunity of a trip to Egypt and Palestine, but wait a few years, and you will not care to walk much farther than your own garden gate. A visit to the British Museum or the Royal Academy means a good deal to some of you now, but there will come a time, if you live long enough, when you would rather sit in the arm chair in the corner, and watch the firelight flickering on the wall. You would cheerfully pay your half-crown to-day for such a visit; then you

would rather pay your half-crown to be allowed to stop at home.

Some things get worse instead of better, but the Truth doesn't. On the contrary it gets better and better the longer you keep it. Some of you may feel that you would not care to part with it now, but the time is coming when all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them wouldn't tempt you to give it up, no, not for an hour; for whatever may be the case in time of health and strength, true religion is felt to be of rare value in the time of sickness, while to a man about to die, continents of gold and silver would be but the rubbish of the dunghill beside it. And then, moreover,

V.—*You can get nothing worth having if you do sell it.* I say that emphatically without the slightest fear of successful contradiction. That it will be represented to you in quite another light I know, but who are they that will do this, and why will they do it? The answer is, Satan will do so, and all they whose eyes and hearts he has been able to blind. But you know better in spite of their specious words. You know that partly from former experience. What may be obtained in the service of sin some of you know, and if you leave the Saviour's service for it, you have nothing but that to go back to. And in going back to it, you will not find it as it was. That is impossible. The so-called pleasures of sin can never be again to you what they have been. For you have known something better, and the remembrance of that something better will spoil all. Muddy water is not very pleasant to the taste at any time, but if after drinking at the well head a man goes back to it again, it is simply disgusting. Coarse sackcloth is not very nice to cover yourself with, but to go back to sackcloth after pure fine linen is simply bad. It might be different if a man had never known of anything better, but when he has known it, it is that that makes it evil. Perhaps acorns and beechnuts might afford some rude pleasure to us if we knew nothing of bread, but after bread a man is simply a hypocrite who professes to enjoy them. And it is not merely that you have known something better, but the felt inferiority of what you go to will be made all the worse by a guilty conscience. It is a profound delusion that this world can give any price for

the Truth that it is worth any man's while to take. Say it offers this Pleasure I have been talking of. How short lived it is! How feverish and inconstant! How certain to leave an aching void behind it! Sometimes it offers Honour. "If you will not be so scrupulous and stiff," it says, "you shall come to high estate. If you will consent to fall in with the general custom and to do as others do, the world will love you. These taunts and jeers shall cease. These covert reminders of your ignoble origin shall be no more heard. These barriers against advancement shall be broken down. These petty persecutions shall come to an end. The whip and the pillory and the common prison shall be exchanged for the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the market places." Well, suppose these promises are kept, is this honour worth the having? Can any degree of human greatness satisfy a man who knows he has gained it at the expense of principle? But the promise is not always kept. Satan offered the Apostle Peter Honour once in Pilate's hall, if he would sell the Truth, and threatened him with shame if he wouldn't. In an evil moment, Peter struck the bargain, and clutched at the price, but you all know how it slipped through his fingers, and how he lost both Truth and Honour too. Riches is a very common offer for the Truth. "If you will but part with this meddlesome and straightlaced superstition," says the Devil, "and just be a good fellow like anybody else, you shall get on, you shall make money, you shall grow wealthy. Men must live," he whispers, "and these sour-faced hypocrites who call it cheating, would any of them do the same if they had the chance. Only give me the Truth, and you shall have money." So he said once to Gehazi when Naaman was standing at the door of the house of Elisha, and Gehazi thought he saw a chance, and took it and got the money—nay, twice as much as he had dared to hope for. Do you remember whether he got anything else not in the bargain? How did it come to pass that Gehazi's face grew white, and Gehazi's flesh corrupt, and the lips that had formed that clever lie began to rot away in loathsome leprosy? The Tempter said nothing about that. It was only, "You shall have money, if you will sell the Truth." And money he had, but he was worse off with it than the

raggedest beggar that sat by the gate of Samaria. Satan says it to many a one, besides Gehazi, now-a-days, and they sometimes get money, but lose peace. But he does not always press for the total transfer of the truth—indeed does he ever do that at first?—but puts it gently as if he said, "Sell me part of the Truth, a little of this treasure. Why be so careful about public worship twice on the Lord's day? Isn't once enough after the toils of the week? Why trouble yourself about class or prayer-meeting so much? Wouldn't now and then do instead of always? Why search the Scriptures in this penance-doing fashion? Wouldn't a chapter or so on a Sunday do you as much good? Why stop to the after-meeting always on a Sunday night? Isn't it well to meditate at home sometimes, and leave the work to younger men? Why draw such a stiff line for business, just at Saturday night. Wouldn't it be well to open your invoices and so on, on Sunday morning, just to see whereabouts you are? Why be so particular about absolute truth in your advertisements? Doesn't everybody puff and colour things a little? Or if a customer doesn't get quite the same quality of goods at the counter that you show in the window—well, you cannot afford to send business away. In fine," he says, "I'm not so careful about all, but sell me a little of the Truth, and you shall get on." And men listen to him sometimes, and beginning with what seem slight compromises of principle, give way a little here, and a little there, and get on so far and fast in the downward way that, almost before they know where they are, they are doing things with ease that they would once have shrunk from with a mortal dread.

I said, with ease, but mark you, not with peace. Peace only dwells with him who dwells with God. Backsliders never know what that is. They knew it once, but just in proportion as they depart from Christ, does it depart from them, until they become of all men most grossly cheated, of all men most profoundly miserable. Then for the second time they walk in gloom and restlessness and terror of the future, and out of the darkened heavens come flashes of prophetic flame, and thunders muttering ever and anon, "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a

man give in exchange for his soul?" Then also they sometimes feel that they would give all the world if they could get back again to the simplicity of their first obedience, and the gladness of their first love. There is nothing worth having if you do sell it, and

VI.—*Beside, you cannot tell that you can get it again.*

It is not often that Satan attempts to persuade a man that he can do without it when he comes to die. Probably experience has taught him that the easier plan with us is, to admit the need of it then, but to put off the day of securing it. It is astonishing how successful that strategy is. He rarely attempts the fidelity of any Christian, without the aid of this plausible fiction. "Sell the Truth," is his suggestion, "and if you do not like the bargain, you can buy the Truth again. Is not God merciful," the Tempter whispers. But Satan carefully hides from us the fact that this is one of those things that are more easily said than done. The Truth is not bought and sold like an article of common merchandise. God is not at our beck and call whenever we please. Some men have provoked Him, so that He has laughed at their calamity, and mocked at their fear. Some men have so trifled with His grace, that their restoration has become a moral impossibility. "You can buy it again," he says. Yes, but what if you don't care to buy it? Does not sin lead to hardness of heart? Can any man be penitent without the grace of the Holy Spirit? Is not that Spirit sometimes quenched—grieved—driven away? And what if you do want to buy the Truth. Have there not been cases where men have desired it, desired with a desire that was agony, but never got it? What does that parable of the foolish virgins mean? Did they not want oil, and go to get it, and after all were shut out from the marriage feast? Besides life itself might close before the chance came. If this Truth were parted with to-day, death might come to-morrow. Surely no one will say that that is impossible, but if—if it came—what then? Dear brethren, you do not know that you can get it again. It is a foul and fatal lie from the father of lies contrived to lure you to your ruin. You do not know—no one knows—no one can know that he will be able to buy the Truth again if he sells it now. What we know is that we are parting with a priceless treasure, and for

aught that we can tell, we may be parting with it for ever!

Then hold it fast, you that have bought the Truth, and anew, as in the sight of Him that gave it you, and of those blessed spirits who are trusting that you will keep the solemn charge, resolve that you will never part with it. Set before your eyes again the facts that ought to move you. If you let it go, your own common sense of what is right and wrong will not hold you guiltless; if you keep it, you will have the testimony of a quiet conscience. If you let it go, the probability is that you will sink as low, and fare as badly, as some whom you know now, who have denied the faith; if you keep it you shall be saved from their restlessness, and be a stranger to their shame. If you let it go, you will let go what you have proved to be an undoubted blessing; if you keep it, you will be like a man who holds by God's gold and silver, bearing the Hall mark of the Eternal Treasury. If you let it go, you part with wondrous possibilities of wealth in the after time; keep it, and you may, nay, you shall be amongst the princes of His people by and by. If you let it go, what can you get for it? You will be like a man who parts with the Roses of Sharon for a bunch of stinging nettles, or gives up diamonds and rubies for bits of worthless spar. Keep it, and you keep purity, and gladness, and a quiet conscience, and a hope of Heaven. Let it go, and you may never get it any more, but be a pauper and a slave in God's universe through all the ages; keep it, and you know that you shall have a crown of glory that shall never fade away. O brethren, keep it as you would your life! Be deaf to all entreaties to dispose of it. Robbery you need not fear: about that freedom of your will there stands none who can snatch it from you; but take inviolable guard that no one whispers, or wheedles, or cajoles, or persuades you to give it up, and by and by, He who is the Truth, and the King of Truth, and to whom all listen who are of the Truth, will say to you, "Good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

SERMON VIII.

LESSONS FROM DOTHAN.

"*Then the King of Syria warred against Israel,*" &c.—2 Kings vi, 8-23.

THERE are several things in this old record worthy of more than a passing notice by the men of these modern times, lay and cleric, high born and lowly. It is concerning, chiefly, the fortunes of the prophet Elisha during one of those difficult times when Israel and Syria were at war, and one of the first observable things in it is

I.—*The great service rendered by the prophet to the State.*

The eighth verse gives us a glimpse of Syrian strategy. The warlike monarch is taking counsel with his servants as to the conduct of the campaign. The question is where the camp shall be? It is settled at last, and the point of vantage is reached and secured, and the Syrian lion waits for his prey, but that prey comes not, except some weary scout who disappeared as quickly as he came. Not an Israelitish soldier comes near. It is strange, but they will try again. Another march and another encampment, but still without result. A third time they had their enemy they imagined in a trap, if he came that way, and a third time all their pains were fruitless. This was passing strange, and indeed suspicious, so the King of Syria called together his servants, and charged some of them with treachery. Which of them was the traitor, he angrily asked. None of us, answered one of them, "but Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the King of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber." The man was not far

wrong. The cause of this thrice repeated disappointment did certainly lie with Elisha. Whether he knew of the Syrian plans by ordinary means, or by special revelation, three times he warned the King of the danger, and three times saved his life. I don't know that this is a precedent for christian ministers taking an active part in the wars of the land they belong to, and riding to battle helmeted and mailed to mingle in the bloody work of the stricken field—I think the world has seen enough of that—though there may be struggles in which it is the bounden duty of every man, minister or not, personally to share, but at any rate it shows us of what advantage it is to the nation to have good men in their midst, and it sets in a new and striking light the fact that the truest patriots are ever those who have most of His Spirit about them who "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." It may not be within the power of all Christians to render such literal service to the state as Elisha did, but there is a service that they can and do render, not less practical or true. The state itself takes little notice of it. Those who are the most deeply benefited are often the last to acknowledge it. Nay so blinded often are their eyes that they have risen up against them, and hissed and hounded them out of society and out of life, as if they were their deadliest foes, but God knows all about it, and the day shall declare how that the truest helpers of any nation were not its great men, or its clever men, or its rich men, or its learned men, or its honourable men, or its mighty men, or its commercial men, or its fighting men, or its philosophical men, or its working men, but—its good men! I yield to none in admiration of those noble qualities of energy, and courage, and perseverance, those rare endowments of head and heart that have lifted our own land into the highest place amongst the nations, but I am persuaded that their richest source and truest nourishment is Faith in God, and I augur great things still for our country, not as I see our land better farmed, or our universities becoming more popular, or our volunteers more efficient, or our ironclads more invulnerable, but as I see our Sabbaths better kept, our sanctuaries better attended, and the Holy Word of God more reverently studied, and more dearly prized.

Brethren, if we wish our nation well we should seek not so much for better wages as a purer faith, not so much larger harvests as happier homes, not so much for a head crammed with knowledge as for a heart glowing with love, not so much for the discoveries of science, as for the inspiration of Pentecost, and we should pray God to send among us not more Benaiahs qualified to lead our armies, or more Ahithophels to counsel in our senate, but more of such men as Moses, whose mighty pleadings often held back vengeance from the stiff-necked Israelities, or such men as Abraham whose glorious peradventures could gain a respite even for Gomorrah, and give to Sodom another chance of life!

The next thing we see in the story is

II.—*How the prophet got into great difficulties in consequence.*

That answer of his servant set the Syrian King on a new train of thoughts. It looked extremely likely—this explanation. This is not the first time he has heard of this Israelitish seer. Where is that great captain who washed seven times in Jordan, and came back to Syria cured of his dreadful leprosy? Was not that in obedience to the word of Elisha? It is clear that so long as Elisha stands against him, this campaign will bring him scanty honour. If he cannot be won over, or killed, or bought, or silenced somehow, the King of Syria had better have stayed at home amongst the shrubberies and gardens of fair Damascus. He must be seized at any cost—this mysterious prophet—so he said, "Go and spy where he is, that I may send and fetch him." Presently they brought the monarch word. They had found him: Elisha was in Dothan. It was time for action then, "therefore sent he thither horses, and chariots, and a great host; and they came by night and compassed the city about." Humanly speaking, he was sure of his victim this time. Dothan was only a little place, nestling apparently in a hollow of the hills, and not at all likely to stand a siege, and all round about it are the horses and the chariots of Syria. Elisha had somehow foiled him in the matter of those encampments, but the king of Syria has stolen a march upon him now, and except he be spirited away in some supernatural manner, it looks very much as if Elisha will see Samaria no more. Can you fancy how they

laughed and joked, those Syrian soldiers, as in the grey of the early morning they looked down upon the city, and saw how cleverly the surprise had been made, how completely the place was surrounded? "Trapped," they they would say, "if ever anyone was. Shut up completely; hedged in, so that he cannot escape." The thing has been so successfully carried out that they may rest a little now—men and horses—for the night march through these Israelitish uplands has wearied them. They have him at their mercy now. Look at the little place. Perfectly surrounded! Not a dog could creep out without being seen! Hurrah for Syrian strategy! Boxed up, shut in, caught, trapped! Thus I fancy the men of that beleaguering host thought and said as they watched the city where Elisha lay.

Turning from those far back days I cannot help but wonder whether this old story has ever been told again in the experience of good men, or whether it stands there by itself not to be repeated. What do you say about this, brethren? Can you help my wonderment? Did you ever from height of espial look down on any Dothan in which lay some Elisha of these times, surrounded by watchful foes? Or have any of you from within the city looked out upon the Syrian hosts that lay upon the heights? Might "Dothan" be inscribed on any place by which you have passed in your journeyings hither? Does the name wake any memories within you of what you yourself have known? Is it possible that in some Dothan of difficulty any of you are besieged to-day? Do Christian men ever get surrounded by their troubles now? They have been formerly, but are they ever so to-day? Sometimes, dear brethren, are they not? When slander slinks about the byways of society doing its dastardly tricks, and uttering its cowardly whispers in the dark against them, when the hopes of years are broken in a day, and purposes that seemed as firm as granite shiver and crumble into formless sand; when friends prove faithless, and eyes that once smiled a welcome at our coming, put on the scorner's staring, and practise the cynic's sneer; when children wax rebellious and unkind, and repay our care with ridicule, and our love with bitterness; when partners take advantage and betray their trust; when our ventures prove

unsuccessful, the cargo we have shipped nigh valueless, the goods we have purchased a drug upon the market; when the vessel that we owned founders uninsured, or the bank that we had shares in, breaks, or the water floods the mine, or the corn rots upon the sodden fields, or the cattle die upon the plague smitten farm; when the bill is due to-morrow, and we don't know how to meet it; when the rent will be demanded next week, and they say they won't wait any longer for it: when sharpers seize upon our hard won earnings, and conspiracy has dulled the ear of Justice and perverted the cause of the poor; when oppression keeps back the wages of the hireling, and pleads not the cause of the widow; when the fatherless find no mercy from men, and the cry of the orphan is forgotten; when ruthless Death is stalking through the household, and lifting his hand to lay our fairest and dearest low; when sickness smites them into helplessness, and lays them a burden upon others' care; when weak and weary with some sore affliction we totter down and down until, through the chilly mists, it seems as if we heard the plash and murmur of the last cold river, and could almost see the silvery glint upon its breaking waves—then we may be said to be in Dothan, with the Syrians encompassing the city.

Our case is like Elisha's too in that these crowding evils *often come in consequence of our doing right.* If we had been willing to compromise principle, to be a little less truthful, not quite so upright, not quite so transparent and honest, these complications might never have arisen, but we have tried to do our duty, and so have had to suffer for it. Frequently also they come about us *almost as suddenly as did these Syrians.* When the sun went down at Dothan the day before, all was well. The listener on the walls heard no tramp of hostile soldiers; no warlike pennon fluttered in the evening wind; no spear head glittered in the reddened rays; no prancing chargers spurned the ground beneath them; quietly the flocks lay down to rest, quietly the stars came out upon the city that presently sunk unapprehensive into sleep. With the morning light all is changed. Those grassy knolls around the city are covered with the hosts of Syria, and Dothan that dwelt peacefully yesterday must now know all the horrors of war. So with

us. Yesterday, strong and well; to-day, feeble and maimed and wounded. Yesterday in comfortable circumstances; to-day, on the verge of bankruptcy. Last month, a happy bride; this month, wearing the weeds of widowhood. A week or two ago, a house that rang with merry voices, a table round which gathered smiling faces; to-day, silence and sadness, empty chairs at the table, fewer faces round the fire. Yesterday, like mountain climbers, with the free air round them and the unclouded blue above them, and clear in the golden glory of the day the wished-for summit; to-day, like those same climbers wrapped in drenching mists, the rough way slippery with the dampness; to go back, dangerous; to go forward, doubtful; and all the beauty of the landscape gone like a dream when one awaketh. Yesterday, free as the eagle flying in the firmament of heaven; to-day, like that same eagle, snared and taken and caged!

And very often *they seem to be as completely round us* as were these Syrians around Dothan. There doesn't appear to be any way of escape. You don't know what to do, where to go, whom to speak to. In other troubles there did seem a way of deliverance, but in these Dothan difficulties you are shut up altogether. Like Israel on their march from Egypt, everything seems against you; before you roll the waters of the Red Sea, on either side rise the rocky hills of Etham, behind you come on the chosen chariots of Egypt, and Pharaoh, as he lashes his foaming horses, laughs hoarsely as he cries, "they are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in!" This is being hedged up, shut in, encompassed about with difficulty. The next thing the story tells us is.

III—*How the prophet bore himself under these troubles.*

You would not have been much astonished if he had been quite confounded, at least for a time, but he displayed no feeling of that kind either first or last. His servant did, and to some extent. Getting up early in the morning and going forth, the sight of those bristling spears quite staggered him, and he seems to have come running back to his master almost unmanned. "Alas, my master! how shall we do?" he cried. "Do very well," the prophet answered in effect, "for they that be with us are more than they that be with them," and didn't seemed

moved at all. But he talked in riddles to his servant, for he couldn't see a tenth part as many helpers, put all Dothan together, let alone more. What can Elisha mean? He saw his follower couldn't understand it, so he prayed and said, "Lord open his eyes that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha." I should like to have seen that sight, but I am content to read about it, and believe it, and to learn the comfortable lesson that it taught. I don't wonder now that the prophet was so calm. If Heaven condescend to set a guard thus around its children, we can easily afford to be at rest in the presence of our foes. How many of them were there? Who were the leaders of that celestial host? Who marked out the lines of that encampment? Who ordered their sublime march, and marshalled them in their going? How did they rein in those fiery steeds? In what forge did they fashion those glowing axletrees, or round those flashing wheels? How came the angels to put on such guise of earthly warfare? I don't know, dear brethren; I don't very much want to know just now. It is enough for me to know that these were God's angels sent out to care for and protect God's servant. These were some of those "ministering spirits" who are "sent forth to minister for them that are heirs of salvation." I don't know how far that ministry extends, what are the special duties of that high commission which these angels bear, but I know there is such a ministry, and while it extends to the saintly spirit who by long communion with his Lord has been changed into the same image, it reaches down to the very least of these little ones that believe in Jesus. Ay, to the humblest and least! To the little child that prattles and plays in the nursery, and learns its a, b, c, in the school. To the begrimed and ragged urchin that knows no nursery but the pavement, and no school but the street, for these in their irresponsible infancy are heirs of glory, vile though their surroundings be. To the poor seamstress who, in some ill lighted garret, plies the busy needle, as well as to the high born lady who follows Jesus in stately mansion or baronial hall. To the godly widow who stands all day long at the wash tub to get

bread for her little ones, as well as to her happier sister who has need of nothing. To him who grooms the horses, or digs the drain, or swings the scythe, as well as to the heir of a great inheritance, or the leader of a mighty people. To the sailor before the mast, as well as to the martyr before his judges. To him who breaks stones on the road, as well as to him who breaks hearts in the pulpit. To the humblest soldiers in the Lord's army, as well as to their fiery captain that can command the moon to linger over Ajalon, and bid the sun stand still. To the weakest believer who in his closet can just say with tears, "Lord I believe, help my unbelief," as well as to the princeliest Apostle before whose mighty message men tremble and fall like corn that is smitten by the hurricanes of God!

Then take comfort, brethren, about whom these earthly cares are gathered. If you are Christ's disciples, your true interests are secured. What though the manner of your deliverance be as yet unknown, dare you not trust Him for His grace? What though you see no way out of your difficulties, is His Wisdom baffled? What though the vision tarrieth a little, can you not wait a while? What though a thousand hosts lie camped around you, are they nearer you than He is? What though they have seized on every road, and entrenched themselves on every hill, cannot He that brought Peter from his thrice barred prison, or passed Himself through the hooting rabble of Nazareth, bring you also into a place of safety? You say your guards are not seen, what of it? Is there, then, nothing round you but what you can see? Are you sure there are no other listeners in this house but yourselves? Are these all that are present before God now, these that came in through yon doors? Are there none among us who have just come from the chanting of the seraphim, whose feet a while ago rested on the sea of glass, and whose faces shine, if we could see them, from beholding "the King in his beauty?" "Sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation!" Perhaps they are come on this commission now. Perhaps they hold the clue to extricate you from your labyrinth. Perhaps, when your faith is tried a little longer, they are ordered to set you free. Anyhow they are with you, and He that sends

them is with you. Though you have many foes, you have many friends, and one Friend better than all the others, and you can well afford to say to Him

"O Lord of Hosts, Almighty King!
While we so near thy presence dwell,
Our faith shall rest secure, and sing,
Defiance to the gates of hell."

IV.—*But Elisha was delivered from his difficulties at last.*

In answer to his prayer a sort of blindness settled on these Syrians. Then Elisha went out, and led them like men that dreamed, until they came to Samaria. Praying again, the mysterious holding of their eyes was gone, and they in their turn were taken in a snare, for they were in the midst of Samaria. Greatly excited at the strange opportunity, the King of Israel wants to slay them there and then. But the prophet will not allow him, Early though those times were, Elisha had caught something of the spirit of the better days that were coming, and gave his master a practical illustration of the christian law, "Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing, thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head." A great feast was made for these unwilling guests, and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away, and they went to their master; and such was the impression produced by the whole thing, that the army struck its tents, and marched home again, and it was a long time before any Israelitish shepherd heard again a Syrian trumpet, or was startled at the flashing of a Syrian sword. Thus was that Scripture fulfilled; "Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him; I will set him on high, because he hath known my name."

And will it be fulfilled to us in similar fashion? We cannot tell. God sometimes now

"Moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform."

His gracious interpositions are beyond the grasp of any human philosophy. Help often comes from a quarter from which we least expected it. Just when we thought our troubles were about to crush us, the way opens through the very midst of them, and we go out into a large and wealthy place. One thing is certain, that, "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye

are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." In what direction that way shall lie is of little moment. We are in the hands of God. If he see fit to bring us forth into the broad field of the world's activities, well and good: that shall be a deliverance. If he see fit to allow the trouble to continue, and give us grace to bear it, that also shall be well. And if He see fit to take us out of our difficulties by taking us to Himself, that shall be everlasting deliverance. That will come to us sometime, if we be faithful, and will crown the long list of merciful deliverances, and will show to us in the highest sense, what this story of Dothan has to-day been teaching us in a lower one, how truly "Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him."

SERMON IX.

THE LIFE AND TRANSLATION OF ENOCH.

And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him."—Gen. v, 24.

IT is difficult to realize how long ago this was. A hundred years ago seems a long step back into the past to those who think—a hundred years ago, when the father of the aged man whose white locks remind you of the driven snow, was learning his letters; when the quaint carvings on the family mansion that are now greened over, and broken and chipped, looked new and beautiful; when the grimy streets that are all speaking of repair and rottenness now, were only in some builder's fancy, and sheep bleated and oxen browsed where now boys stand and count the broken railings, and play at marbles in the hollows of the stones. Two hundred years are longer still; five hundred years longer still; till when you come to a thousand years ago, it is but as a dream to you. You count the centuries but no more. But to get back to Enoch's time, you must take a journey five times as great. Beginning now, you go back 800 years past the wars of the Roses to the Norman conquest, then back 1,000 years, past the age of Alfred and Bede and Augustine, of Allaric and Attila, of Constantine, and Irenæus, and Polycarp, and you get to the day of the Pentecost, and the day of the Crucifixion. And on again back through the ringing avenues of change, past 400 years

of the silence of the prophetic Spirit up to Malachi, and Nehemiah, and Esther, and Daniel, and back again more than 500 years past the long line of kings of Israel and Judah to David and Saul and Samuel: and on again through four centuries by Samson and Gideon to Joshua; and then through the long years of Egyptian bondage, to the days when the waggons of Pharaoh stood at Jacob's door in Canaan; and then by peaceful Isaac and faithful Abraham back, back through six more centuries to the time when the Ark floated over the grave of a world; and back, still back through a thousand years, and you stand amongst the first fathers of the race, and by the cradle of the man who walked with God. To know anything, almost, about men who lived then would be welcome; how much more when the knowledge shapes itself into the significant form in which we have it here, "Enoch walked with God, and was not, for God took him."

With just one stroke of the pen the inspired historian tells us how Enoch lived, and with another how he passed away.

A word or two about both these statements. And

I.—*How Enoch lived:* He walked with God.

You will observe that the life of this eminent patriarch is looked at from a religious standpoint rather than a secular. It is the aspect of his life towards God that is preserved for the thought of the world, and it is not to be forgotten that this record was made at the direct instance of the Infinite Mind. He that searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God, chose rather that Enoch should be known to the ages following by this characteristic than by any secular or temporal distinction. And wherefore by this? Because it is of all others the noblest; worthiest the high powers with which God has endowed us; the source and secret of all those lesser departments of activity that are profitable merely to the earthly existence. This relationship is *the* relationship to us all, the keystone of the arch of character, the one thing in which if we fail, it matters little in what else we succeed; the one thing in which if we succeed, it matters little in what else we fail. To the world in its foolish wisdom this is but a distasteful subject. If you could have said about him that he walked with Nature, and was a student of her hidden mysteries,

that he was a master of the sciences, or skilled in the arts, a great explorer, a successful merchant, a brilliant speaker, a daring warrior, or even a mighty hunter, it would be better pleased. Then you would really have said something, according to its philosophy; but to say only that he walked with God is to have said next to nothing, and that of a dreamy and unpractical kind. Ah, no! This "only" is everything, and so far from being unpractical, is the most profoundly energetic of all the influences that mould human action, and shape human destiny. Nay more, the truest and most lasting Fame has its roots just here, and the time is coming, not only in the next world but in this, when not the witty, or beautiful, or eloquent, or wealthy, or brilliant, or powerful, nay, not even the royal, but "the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance," while "the name of the wicked shall rot."

But this emphatic statement presupposes and rests upon things temporal, and many of these must have been of the most interesting kind. As the abode of man, the world was but in its infancy when Enoch was born, and had barely seen six centuries. Human life in those days was a marvel and a sign. Men would live nearly a thousand years before they yielded to the last enemy. Where now the skin is wrinkled, and the eyes dim, and the aged grandsire sits by the hearth, chilled and feeble, the man in those days had barely come to maturity. The locks were raven, and the limbs supple, and the eyes bright then, after ten such lives as these that we see now had been extinguished. A Patriarch would have been mute with astonishment to see a man as we do getting grey at fifty, and worn out at seventy years of age. By the ordinary course of nature there could not have been very many deaths in the world when Enoch was born. Adam was living, Seth was living, Enos was living, Cainan was living, Mahalaleel was living, Jared was living; and all but one of these were destined to live after he was gone. Adam was in the prime of life when Enoch was born—just 622 years old—and for aught we know may have often looked with an eye that was prophetic on the cradle of his eminent descendant. Certainly the boy Enoch would have many opportunities of looking on the face of him who had seen God in Eden, and who shall say how

often, when the sun was sinking in the west, he listened with a wistful eagerness to the first father of the race as he recounted the fatal story of the Fall. Adam must have been to him a book in which men read strange matters, and I can fancy the ardent youth gazing on him with an interest that was almost awe, and coming to his dwelling again and again to hear about the glory of that wonderful garden, about the serpent, and about the flaming sword. Nothing is said about what he did for a livelihood. Something he must have done, and it seems as likely as not that this was in the direction in which the energies of the first human family were turned. Nor is anything said as to the great change that threw a glory over all the life. Whether he grew up a bold and fearless boy, headstrong and sinful, and was smitten into penitence and prayer by some sudden stroke of God's providential mercy; or always thoughtful and quiet, grew up into a godly youth and a godly manhood as the twilight grows into the day, we cannot tell; but we know that born of the first Adam as he was, he needed to be born again by faith in the promised Second, before he could enter into the Kingdom of God. And born again, born from above, he unquestionably was, and knew the blessedness of that man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile. It is stated concerning him that he walked with God from the birth of his first child—300 years. It is not certain whether this means that the holy life that had begun before continued after, and in spite of the varied trials of family life; or that from that time his character blossomed into a completer beauty; but at any rate there is the statement—the first of its kind since the fatal day in Eden—that for 300 years this man walked with God. With two more glimpses of him, the Scripture notices of his life close. Once in the Epistle to the Hebrews we see him hung up in the great portrait gallery of the eleventh chapter, second in the list of men of faith, and with this emphatic addition that before his translation he had this testimony that he pleased God. And once in the Epistle of St. Jude he is represented as a prophet, and one of his prophecies is recorded for us: "Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly

among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." The main features of such a character we know. It was eminently holy, happy, useful and beautiful. Enoch was not an angel, but a thoroughly good man who learnt by the grace of God to do His will on earth as it was done in Heaven. We need not suppose that he learnt the lesson all at once, or learnt it without a struggle, or practised it when it was learnt without many a hard fight, and perhaps many a fall, but he did learn it, and he did practise it, so that He who judges of human actions with unerring wisdom could say about him during 300 years of his life that he walked with God. Now this does not mean that he went through his daily life in a kind of spiritual rapture, a half abstracted condition of mind, a dreamy look about his eyes that made you feel that, while you were talking to him, he wasn't listening to you, but thinking about something else far, far away. I dare say he was like that sometimes, but that was not the habit of his life; men would not know him by that. Nor does it mean that he affected a peculiar strictness in food or clothes, or cultivated a preternaturally solemn look, or thought it a sin if he were surprised into a hearty laugh, or acted as if he were always applying a kind of moral measuring line to himself, and saying, "Now is this quite right, and is that quite right?" Nor does it mean that he was always talking about religious matters, or singing hymns, or acting as if the romping of children, or the frolic of a kitten, were things he took no interest in. Least of all does it mean that he had about him that detestable spirit that says, "Stand by, for I am holier than thou." No, he was a man who loved God, and loved Him perfectly, and loved all His works for His sake, and could honestly say, "I think nothing that relates to man foreign to me;" and in this love fulfilled the law, divine and human. I take it that the general tenor of those 300 years was just this, that he loved God with all his heart, and mind, and soul, and strength, and his neighbour as himself. Put into this world to work, he did his work on this principle, being diligent in business, and fervent in spirit. He did not merely talk about goodness, he practised it—goodness in the house, as well as at the

altar; goodness in the family, and in the market; among the cattle drivers, and the little children; at the table, and in the harvest field; when you were watching him, and when none saw him but God. Such a man, if he were living now, would be a man that you could trust. If he were an apprentice, he would be as attentive to your customers as if the business were his own. If he were a servant, you would have no need to be always after him to see that he was doing his work. If he were a tradesman, you would be quite certain that his goods were what he said they were. If he owed you money, he would pay you twenty shillings in the pound, or part with every luxury he had until he could. If you paid him for silk, it would be silk you would buy, and not silk and cotton. If he contracted to build you a house of cedar, he would not fill it with deal. If he sold you a horse, he would tell you honestly what its value was. Bulk would be according to sample with such a man; materials according to specification; goods across the counter the same as those in the window; performance as good as promise. He was a *thoroughly good* man doing everything—ploughing, preaching, shepherding, woodcutting, praying, visiting, eating, drinking—whatsoever he did, in the spirit of the New Testament law, "in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks unto God and unto the Father by him." He was also a *very happy* man. Those who love God with all their heart always are. It cannot be otherwise. Do you not notice how in human friendships the more powerful mind stamps its own impress upon the weaker one? How much more in that diviner friendship where a mortal walks with God. And it was "the very God of peace" with whom Enoch held communion, It would have been a marvel had he not dwelt in the peace that passeth understanding. Besides what source of sorrow is like sin? Take that away, remove its guilt by pardon, and its in-being by the complete sanctification of the nature, and you come at peace as naturally as men come to warmth in summer time, when some gale of grace has blown the clouds from off the sun.

His was also a *very useful* life. That comes by consequence too. Men cannot live like Enoch did without powerfully influencing those around them for good. They

were the salt of the earth then as now, and preached by lip and life of truth, and goodness, and God.

His was a *very beautiful* life too. All but the very, very dull will see this directly, Good men sometimes have their eccentricities and sharp angles, and Enoch may have had his too, at the beginning, but they would soon wear away beneath this communion with God, and then the life would be rounded off into a beautiful completeness and symmetry that would challenge admiration from all. I think Enoch had got beyond that stage when you say, "he is well meaning, but very queer; good, but odd; right at heart, but difficult to deal with; zealous but narrow-minded;" and had come to the higher plane of life described in the thirteenth of Corinthians, being gentle, and tender, and sympathetic, suffering long and kind, hoping all things, believing all things, enduring all things. Scoffing sensualists and shallow worldlings would very likely sneer at such a life—they do so still—and say they saw no beauty in it, but angels would rejoice as they beheld how fair a jewel was ready for the Redeemer's coronet, and that Redeemer Himself, as He beheld in Enoch all the steadfastness and strength of a holy manhood united with the simplicity and trustfulness of a holy child, would say, "Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven." So Enoch lived. We come now to the question of

II.—*How he passed away.* "He was not," says Moses, "for God took him." "He was translated," says the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews, "that he should not see death." So perhaps it would scarcely be right to speak of how he died, for he never did die as we do. What was this translation, this not-being? The record gives no particulars. Perhaps Moses did not know any; perhaps no one knew. "God took him"—that is all. And for our comfort that is all we need, but our curious hearts would fain know more. Did he know it was coming—this marvellous transference? In that hallowed communion with his heavenly Father, had there been some opening of the secret? Had he caught some whisper that all was ready, and he was wanted up above? Was it given to any of the ministering spirits to whisper to him that the banquet of the skies was ready, and the King was waiting? Did he come back from some hour of secret

converse with his Maker with the token that this sitting on the lowest seat was finished, and he must come up higher? Or was it that all of a sudden there was a rushing of wings through the air, and a sparkle of wheels, and there stood a chariot before him, and he that reined in the fiery steeds motioned to him to enter, and then with a flash of glory and a burst of music—he was gone? Was that it? And how did men know? Were there any Elishas round this Elijah, waiting in rapt suspense the fateful moment, who caught the falling mantle of the ascending prophet? Or did some of the shining ones bear tidings to the bereaved family that their father was not dead but risen, and that thus it must be done to the man whom the King delighteth to honour? Anyhow they knew it, and for many a year as the day came round again, men would sit and tell to one another how for the first time since the fatal day in Eden, Death had been swallowed up in Victory. Enoch never saw it. That Jordan that sometimes overfloweth all his banks was as dry as on the day when Israel marched in triumph into Canaan. That last enemy that sometimes maketh sore battle for God's soldiers never came in sight or hearing all that day, and Satan stood confounded as he saw how faith in the promised Saviour had brought a sinner pardon, then robed him round about with purity, and then from the joys of a perfect holiness had translated him—more than Conqueror—to Heaven!

So Enoch lived, and so from this world he passed away, and from that high place to which he has ascended, he says to us to-day, "Be followers of me." Brethren, let us hear his voice. Let us hold it firmly that to live as he did is possible to us all. He was a man of like passions with ourselves, who had the same infirmity of nature, the same temptations to master, the same need of grace and mercy, and not the same advantages. For our day is brighter than his, our privileges are greater. Therefore if he in those days could so live as to walk with God, we can in these days the rather. Something of this grace many of you already have. You do already by faith in Jesus rejoice in God as your reconciled Father. You know as Enoch did that your sins are forgiven. Holiness unto the Lord is the watchword of your life; and heaven is your home. But it may be there yet remains some root

of bitterness; the communion with God though real is not always clear; joy in the Holy Ghost is sometimes absent; the peace of God is not abiding; the victory over sin is not always constant. That is, you have life, but you want the more abundant life. You have love, but you want it making perfect. You do serve God, but you want to serve Him without fear. You have a measure of the Spirit, but you want to be filled with the Spirit. You are saved from sin's dominion, but you need to be cleansed from all unrighteousness. You are sanctified to God, but you need to be entirely sanctified. Your state is good, but it may be better. As it was with Enoch, so it may be with you, and if in this day of your necessity you will trust the Saviour who has pardoned to be the Saviour who can purify, the faith that trusts for all will be the faith that gains all, and then from that new starting point you shall go on towards Heaven, in the old pathway, but with a kindlier light upon it, God's strength made perfect in your weakness, until there shall come a day when, if you see death, it shall be only with smiles, for the sting shall be taken.

"Angels, joyful to attend,

Will

Hovering round your pillows bend
Wait to catch the signal given,
And escort you quick to Heaven."

Then you shall

"Burst the shackles, drop the clay,
Sweetly breathe yourself away:
Singing to your crown remove
Mounting high on wings of love."

SERMON X.

GEHAZI.

"*But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God,*" &c.—II Kings v, 20-27.

"THERE is a tide in the affairs of men, which taken at the flood, leads on to fortune." So sang a certain great poet whom the world has delighted to honour, and so thought a great sinner whom the world has gibbeted for his crime. That poet sang not quite three hundred years ago, and that sinner imagined his iniquity, when, in the days of Jehoram the king, a party of Syrian soldiers began to ride away through the streets of Samaria towards the city of Damascus from the door of the house of Elisha. The name of that poet you will easily guess. The name of that sinner was Gehazi. How he came to think so, what that thought gave rise to, how he seized the opportunity that looked to him so golden, how he ventured on the flood that seemed so full of promise, what fortune that was to which his venture led him, and what was the final issue of it all, these verses teach us, and declare with awful eloquence how in the mysterious marchings of God's providence, Trouble treads evenly with Transgression, and Sorrow goes hand in hand with Sin!

Let us listen to their teachings now. And

I.—*What was the occasion of Gehazi's sin?*

Do you see that noble looking man in the chariot who, by his majestic bearing and the splendour of his accoutrements, is evidently leader of the party? Mark him well.

He is a man whom it will be a privilege to know. He has noble qualities, this Syrian soldier. He is impetuous in disposition, nay, a little hot in temper, and yet withal graced by a rare gentleness. His attendants love him: you can see that in their looks. His soldiers follow him with confidence. His servants over there in Damascus think of him with kindness. His Sovereign honours him most highly. He has good things in him, this Naaman, captain of the Syrian armies. He goes away just now from Samaria cured of a dreadful disease. He came here from his master white with leprosy, but after washing seven times in Jordan according to the order of Elisha, his flesh came again like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean. You may imagine after this how gleefully they all rode back from the rushing river up to high Samaria. In the heart of Naaman dwelt a noble thankfulness. 'What should he do for the prophet,' he asked, when again he stood before him? 'Nothing,' replies the high-minded Israelite, better pleased to give than take. But he must take something, urges the grateful Syrian, and with a generosity that would not have shamed a far truer faith than he knew, he pressed him; but Elisha would not, and Naaman rode away towards home, taking back gold and silver as he brought them, and in this unpurchased cleansing reminding us not a little of another and yet greater blessing, which, in the fulness of time, in those very streets of Samaria, would be proclaimed to Jew and Gentile alike, "without money and without price." Such thoughts, however, were not in Gehazi's mind. He thought this a sparing of the Syrian, and as he watched him ride away *evil imaginings rose in him.* He *looked at* a sinful thing. Here is money. Naaman wants to give it. Elisha won't have it. Gehazi could get it if he tried. Money! It grew as he thought of it. Oh how much it meant! Gorgeous apparel rose before him, gay with all the colours of the rainbow; rich enclosures full of fruitful olive trees, and hillsides where the vines shall cluster; flocks and herds feeding in the valleys, tended by obsequious slaves: and, as he thought of it, he took another step. He *desired* what he looked at, for he could get it if he tried was the temptation, and though he knew that trying could only be in one way, and that was wrong,

looking soon led to liking, and liking put on boldness, and became *resolve*. The trial should be made, he said to himself: "As the Lord liveth, I will run after him, and take somewhat of him." No doubt all this took place in much less time than I have taken to tell it, but these were the steps down which Gehazi ran to sin. Ay ran, dear brethren, for the road to ruin is no climb to a depraved nature, but is often swiftly traversed. The proverb of your school days, "facilis descensus Averni," is sadly true. These well worn steps in the dark desert are only too familiar to us all, as are the circumstances under which Gehazi fell, for he was *face to face with one of those opportunities to sin* which, in the providence of God, are permitted through the whole of our probationary life, and he fell as we do. Who doesn't know these opportunities? Times when one false act seems as if it would make us wealthy; when to equivocate would save us from exposure; when to be knave for an hour promises to make us gentlemen for a year. Opportunities! when brute passion clamours, and the moment is favourable, and darkness covers us, and Pleasure solicits, and Satan whispers, "No one will know." Opportunities! When poverty buffets, and friendship fails us; when cherished plans are broken in a moment, and through the fair flowers of the household the stern Mower hath swept his remorseless scythe; and old habits whisper, Take it, and false friends fill the cup and, press you to take it, and the Devil hisses, Take it, and you know that for a while at least it will lift this burden from your heart, and stop the smart of this great sorrow. Opportunities! when a trick will procure advancement; when one sudden blow would rid you of your enemy for ever; when a paltry bribe would make you certain of election; when one act of thievery engages to lift you into competence, and one little lie promises to cover you with gold. Who doesn't know them? But I said, Gehazi fell as we do. Is it so? Are these the steps the sinner takes, looking, liking, resolving, acting? Let us beware of the first step! Let us beware of looking at the forbidden thing, of cherishing even the mental image of iniquity. With the first fatal cherishing, *cherishing* I say, of the evil thought comes the real peril of the soul. Nay, is not that the sin?

Standing on the breezy top of Helvellyn this last summer, and looking down into the fearful hollow where nestles the Red Tarn, I noticed three distinct ideas expressed in the mute eloquence of nature. Just here, and for a distance behind me, level ground and safety. For a foot or two beyond, soft, crumbling shale, and danger; and another foot beyond that—death! Whether to step on that foot of shaly ground would infallibly precipitate me into the abyss, I don't know, but I saw danger there growing greater with every inch of distance. Perhaps a vigorous and determined effort might even there bring you back to safety, but it might not. I shouldn't like to try it, and any of you who have ever set foot on shale, damp, slippery, deceitful, wouldn't like it either. Standing to-day where Gehazi stood, where sinners stand when temptation comes to them, I see the same three things. Looking to Jesus, clinging to Jesus, resisting the Devil, that is safety. Looking at sin, cherishing the thought of sin, dallying with the temptation to sin, that is on the shale! Oh, beware of it, sinner! If thou art on it to-day, it may be through Infinite Mercy that an instant struggle for right may bring thee back from utter ruin, though not unscathed; but to look longer at the thing with which the Infernal Plotter tempts thee may be as much as thy soul is worth. Cry out for mercy instantly, for the shale is slipping, slipping away from under thee, and what is danger to-day may be death to-morrow. Let thy prayer be, "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity," if yet it may be listened to, lest like Gehazi looking, the slip become a slide, and over the rocks of resolution thou drop into the dark waters of iniquity!

II.—*For such an evil as he now yielded to, I fear Gehazi was rather prepared than not.* Of course, it is impossible to speak with absolute certainty of his moral condition previously, but as a straw will show how the current runs, a certain phrase he uttered, as he conceived the iniquitous device, looks to me of evil import. What needs Gehazi with the solemn invocation of the name of God, now of all times? "As the Lord liveth," saith he, "I will do this." Is this the reckless profanity that reckons language feeble except buttressed with blasphemy? Or is it that old habits reassert their sway, and demand of the vassal

tongue the ancient drudgery? Or is it, saddest of all, perhaps a half unconscious use of holy words to which in happier days his service had accustomed him, and whose sacred meaning he has lost, like the forced fervour of a fallen disciple got up to suit a purpose; or, like the muttering of an old experience by the unhappy backslider, who dares not leave the old communion, but has nothing of the old life, or like the mechanical repetition of old sermons by the minister who retains the old sanctuary, and hasn't forgotten the old theological diction, but has lost the unction and life that made the one like the gate of Heaven, and the other sound like the harping of the harps of God!

To hear him say this, too, reminds us of the danger under which they lie who are obliged from their office to be familiar with the forms of holy service. The temptation to be content with a merely formal godliness presses upon them with peculiar power. Ministers know what this means, and ministers' families, and so do the stewards of the church, and so do such officers as vergers, apparitors, chapel-keepers, and so do organists and choirs; these who from necessity are busied with the mechanical and visible things of religion; these, if they do miss the meaning of these familiar facts, miss it very much indeed. A prophet's servant ought to be a good man, but if he isn't, his badness is of no common dye. So much for the beginnings of Gehazi's iniquity.

III.—Let us now see *how the conceived purpose bodied itself in form.* "So Gehazi followed Naaman;" a despicable hunter tracking noble prey. "And when Naaman saw him running after him, he lighted down from the chariot to meet him, and said, "Is all well?" And the ready schemer answered "All is well. My master hath sent me, saying: Behold, even now there be come to me from Mount Ephraim, two young men of the sons of the prophets: give them, I pray thee, a talent of silver, and two changes of garments." And this Syrian gentleman—ay, mark it, gentleman—not stopping to consider whether all this was likely or not, glad to have any opportunity of showing how grateful he was to his benefactor, burdened with an obligation that he knew not how to discharge, said, "Be content, take two talents." Gehazi resisted

with a resistance that was not intended to continue, and so, when this piece of hypocrisy was done with, marched home again with two of Naaman's servants before him bearing the treasure. When he came to the tower, or secret place, he relieved the men of their precious burden, and hid it safely away, and apparently took good care to see them off the ground before he went in and stood before his Master. We can imagine the sincere readiness with which he dismissed them, and watched them disappear over some rising in the road, and we can almost see the smirk of satisfaction with which this successful sinner entered into the presence of Elisha. For has he not been successful? There has not occurred a single hitch in the carrying out of the whole design. No one has suspected him; no one has seen the evil, and he has actually gained without any trouble twice as much as he had dared to hope for. Is not this success? Well perhaps it is, but perhaps it is not? We will wait awhile before we decide, and in the mean time only say *how like it is to what we often see around us now.* Sin seems to succeed. The tradesman whose conscience is elastic gets on in the world. The merchant who has no conscience at all drives his carriage. The unscrupulous workman is advanced to favour. The bold Atheist buys large estates. A lottery ticket sometimes brings a fortune; a throw of the dice sometimes gives a man a thousand pounds. The forger fattens on the spoils of his rascality. The oppressor of the poor adds field to field, and lives in luxury all the day. Grasping ambition seizes the object of its toil. Revenge attains its purpose. Murder goes unmolested through the land, and evil doing lifts its head as proudly, and grows fat and flourishing, as if the Providence of God were a mere figment of an excited fancy, and Eternal Justice only a poetic dream!

And let us clearly understand

IV.—*What sort of evil doing it was that seemed to succeed* in this case, and let us give it its proper name. "Sharp practice this," says, with a Byronic smile, some smart youth just learning the slang of sin, and who likes to talk about "seeing life:" "Sharp practice, Sir," he drawls, between the puffs of his cigar. Well let us call this sharp practice by its proper name. Short sighted knavery, call

it, the taking what is not your own, and if you want a shorter title yet, don't forget the the word thief. Nor let us style Gehazi's fabrication mere story-telling. The word is not strong enough to express the rascality of the thing. Call it lying at once. Don't dress a scoundrel up in fair apparel; don't let falsehood lurk and hide itself behind the shelter of the fair word story. Don't let your children use it for the purpose: keep it for noble employment. Tell them of the story of creation, of the story of redemption, of the story of the cross, but when there's black falsehood there to talk of, teach them to call it a lie, and teach them to think of lying as one of the meanest, basest, blackest things beneath the Sun.

V.—So this successful sinner went in and stood before his Master, and *a change came over the spirit of his dream.* For Elisha said, "Whence comest thou, Gehazi?" There was no time to fence with the question. The truth he dared not tell, so with a brazen face he answered; "Thy servant went no whither." Ah, these awkward questions! And such a simple one, too, to bring such embarrassment with it! Yes, dear brethren, this is God's order in the world, that human life shall not go on in comfort while it is a sinful life: that Difficulty, and Awkwardness, and Embarrassment shall, like three furies, scourge it with their knotted thongs. Nay, other evils wait upon it as well whose lashes cut deeper still, but I think of these just now. What a pitiful spectacle! An intelligent creature made for enjoyment of God and all delightful service degraded into a crouching slave, that slinks and hides away from the light, who cannot meet plain questions without wincing, to whom every rap at the door sounds like an officer of Justice, who trembles when you touch him as if he expected every minute to hear you stop in your ordinary conversation, and, like the faithful prophet of an elder time, to tell him, "Thou art the man." But this is what comes of doing wrong. Ay, and wrong is apt to pull wrong after it. *One false step necessitates another.* Gehazi allows himself in one sin, and has to commit another to make that good. It's a sorry business, this of sin. When you once enter it, you can never tell when you will get clear of it. It's like being a shareholder in a banking company of unlimited liability that has broken. You have

no idea when you'll have finished with the liquidators. They are always making calls upon you. They may leave you a little to live on, and they mayn't leave you a penny. Do you see that company of soldiers hovering on the edge of that great stretch of marshland, and watching intently for something moving among those distant rushes? Do you know what they are after? A rebel against the Government is in hiding somewhere thereabouts, having fled from justice, and has got up to his neck in the mire and water of the morass. 'There he goes,' says one, and flash goes the rifle, and down goes his head among the sedge again. 'I see him,' cries another, and he must dive again to escape the balls. He comes up again in another place, and hopes he is safe, but some quick-eyed watcher has seen him rise, and splash goes the poor wretch's head again, while the bullets whistle and crash around him. Do you think he'll ever come out alive? He may, and he may not; but do you know the man? That is the sinner trying to escape the assaults of truth by lying. It's a bad business, this of sin. If you once go into the morass of Falsehood to hide you from the consequences of former sin, no one can tell when you will come out again. Many a man has been smothered in its filthy slime, trying to avoid the exposure of his sin (this is specially true about falsehood), and how many more will follow you cannot tell. It is folly to say, 'I will do *this*, but not *that* wrong.' You cannot ensure this at all. This sin is a wild horse of the desert. Men are apt to think they know how to manage him. He shall serve their purpose. They will guide him with the snaffle of resolution, or hold him fast with the curb of self-control. They'll spur him with the sharp spurs of cleverness and coolness, and they'll whip him, if he's restive, with a patent lash of their own contrivance. He shall carry them where they like, they say. They can stop him where they please. Can they? Can they? Let the bones that lie scattered over the desert of iniquity bleaching in the sunlight answer! Let the maimed and bleeding victims of wrong-doing that limp and groan about the world to-day answer! Let the ragged loungers about the spirit bars answer, who began with what they called a merry evening, and are like to finish up in a dark night. Let the poor creature answer

who began with "just one dance," and danced, and danced until she danced her virtue all away, and is like to dance her soul to the Devil now! Let the felon in yon prison answer, who began with altering one small account in the ledger, and didn't stop until he was seized for forgery! Or let this worn out gambler answer, who began with playing only for a sixpence, and who has played himself and his family into pauperism. Or let the lost spirits of the pit answer, everyone of whom did once shudder at the thought of evil, everyone of whom did once prattle in the guilelessness of childhood, and lie a happy infant smiling in its mother's face!

VI.—"And he said unto him, Went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee?" Then *Gehazi was detected*, was he? Why, brethren. who is *not*, that sins? Elisha's power of preternatural sight may have begun and ended with this one instance in which, as he put it, his heart had companied his sinning servant; but there is One greater than Elisha, whose far-seeing eye is ever upon us. The mystery that baffles our enquiry is no mystery to Him. He knows the clue to earth's most cunning labyrinth. The tangled skein of our transgression lies before Him in unravelled plainness. The darting thought of vileness is by Him instantly detected. The subtlest conspirators have a Witness with them who has not been bidden to the plotting, and the most secret sin is to Him as open as the day. Yes, if there was none else to watch us; if the clothes we wore were stainless; if the grass we trod on took no notice; if the clouds that covered us sighed no sad reproaches; if the encircling air made no remonstrance, and the sympathetic winds sounded no loud alarm; if success had crowned our labours, and like Gehazi, we had harvested a richer pleasure than we had dared to hope for; our Maker saw us, and in the dread book of His Remembrance has noted down the minutest jot and tittle of our crime!

Oh, brethren, when the thought of evil haunts you; when unholy passion struggles with your better feeling for the mastery; when the fascination of some pleasurable sin is on you, and you feel yourself almost yielding to the strong enchantment; think Who watches you! Think of those eyes, so often dimmed with tears; think of that face,

that for your transgressions was so marred more than any man's. Think of Him who for your redemption bore your sins in His own body on the tree, and let the thought of that unseen but watching Saviour make you say with Joseph, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God."

I cannot now deal with all the lessons that this history teaches; yet I must pause a moment to ask you to look at Gehazi, as he stands detected in the presence of his master, and to hear the words which fell from the prophet's lips: "Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and olive yards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and maidservants? The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever." Ponder too the *suddenness of the punishment*, as expressed in those significant words that close this sad but admonitory history. "And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow." Think *how hurtful sin is to others* beside the sinner, how far and wide its baneful influence extends, and see in the ghastly whiteness that will cling to Gehazi till he dies, an emblem and prophecy of that more lasting punishment which Almighty God will inflict upon all rebellious sinners, who reject His great salvation obstinately to the last.

VII.—But from this fearful topic, I would fain turn to another and brighter one, of which Gehazi saw only the miserable caricature. There is a fortune in the world, though he mistook it: there is a tide that leads to it, and men may venture on it and be blest. But that true fortune is not in money; it is not in beauty; it is not in greatness; it is not in pleasure; it is not in fame; but it is in truth, and goodness, and uprightness, and mercy, and gentleness, and kindness, and meekness, and temperance, and, in one word, in Christ. There's a fortune here for any man, and whoso will venture on the tides of grace to-day shall gain it. There is blessing here for any man, and whoso will seek it rightly shall find it. There is salvation here for any man, and whoso will trust in Jesus shall enjoy it. Only take it at the flood, seize it when it's offered, lay hold of Jesus in that best of all opportunities—now, and in the glory of that great treasure all earthly advantages then will look cold and dim. With

Jesus in you the siren song of earth's seducing music shall seem harsh discord; its costliest gifts shall excite no desire; its fatal pleasures shall environ you in vain. Over all the temptations of the Devil you shall have perfect victory, and on and on the tides of Grace shall bear you, growing more and more like Jesus, happier and holier every day, until the last wave lifts you into your desired haven, and breaking into gentle ripples, leaves you, crowned with an exceeding weight of Glory, standing in the Saviour's presence on the Eternal Shore!

SERMON XI.

THE DISCIPLE'S WATCHWORD.

"*Follow thou me.*"—John xxi, 22.

[First preached January 7th, 1872.]

WE are like travellers to-day who stand together on the borders of a country that we are about to explore, and we want Directions for the journey. We are like mariners who are venturing to cross untravelled seas, and we want our Sailing Orders for the voyage. We are like soldiers who are gathering for another campaign, and we want the Watchword of the march. In these words of Christ to Peter our necessities are met. As travellers to the Better Land, "Follow thou Me" shall hew a way for us through every tangled thicket we may meet with, and light us over every pathless moor. As sailors over life's unquiet waters, "Follow thou Me" shall bring us safely out of every treacherous mist, and help us to weather every storm. As soldiers of the Cross, "Follow thou Me" shall be the drum-beat that shall encourage us to confidence, or the blood stained banner under which we shall march to Victory! "Follow thou Me," said our Lord to Peter, and, yet again, seeing how apt that as yet unsteady disciple was to forget it, He said to him, "Follow thou Me." What did our Master mean? What was the manner of this "following," that was to be to Peter and to us the Watchword of Discipleship. Let me try to answer that question, and leave with you, if by God's help I may, something that shall be a stimulus and a memory for the year.

I think that Jesus wants us to follow Him

I.—*Exclusively.* He has taught us in other places that divided allegiance is not possible. He wants to impress upon us that it is not right. The grounds on which He claims this undivided allegiance, are so many, so distinct, so well known, and to those who are willing to weigh them so conclusive as to duty, that I have more need to ask you to reconsider old lessons now, than to attempt to interest you in new ones. But as a foil to His otherwise dazzling brightness, I think I would hardly mention that other one who has ventured to oppose Him in this direction. It should seem preposterous to ask a man whether Satan shall be his master, when Jesus claims his service. Yet it can do no harm to ask you to reaffirm the old choice, and to say that you will follow exclusively not the Serpent, fanged and venomous, but the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, lordly and majestic; not the Murderer from the beginning, but Him that gives Life, and gives it more abundantly; not the Arch-liar, father of all the frauds and falsehoods that have disgraced the world, but the Incarnate Truth, bright Reflection of His Father's glory; not the base Usurper, who holds over the hearts of the foolish, by shallow or subtle stratagem, a temporary sway, but the Rightful Sovereign for whom the Crown of the world is weaving, and before whose throne of Judgment, either in the constraint of terror, or in the rapture of loving obedience, every one of us shall bow the knee! "Follow thou Me!" I think it means, too, that we are to follow Christ

II.—*Intelligently.* Jesus does not want a senseless service. He doesn't want the homage of a discipleship that is only emotional. He doesn't want you to salute Him with hosannahs of which a bright day, acting on a sensitive and poetic temperament, is the real imspiration; nor does he desire to be called Lord, Lord, if the only reason for it is that you have been taught to say it. Why should the noblest faculty of our redeemed humanity, when the others gather round their Lord with gifts, bear the scantiest offering of all? Why should we study lesser things, and ignore the largest? Why should we know about methods of agriculture, or systems of botany, or the laws of light, or the master pieces of the old painters, or

the genius of departed poets, or the fascinating philosophy of the rocks, or the thousand and one subjects into which the busy brain is always prying, and yet on this greatest of subjects, scarcely be able, when one asks a question, to do more than stand and gape for answer? Perhaps this, you will say, is a little beyond the mark, and so I hope it is, but have you not met with professed disciples of Christ, whose behaviour seemed to show that while they were willing to render Him a service which should be vigorous enough, that is, if voice means vigour, anything like Paul's reasonable service, a godliness that should gather and enlist all the faculties of the soul, was scarcely or never thought of.

This does not mean that with the secrets of this highest of all philosophies we are to be familiar, for that is simply impossible, but that if we have any power of intellect at all, its chiefest and most eager exercise must be given to our relationship with God. We shall find work in this more than sufficient to tax the power of the greatest mind, and though many a question will rise in connection with it that will baffle our acutest insight, yet on such topics as, 'Why I am a christian,' 'What hope this is that is within me,' 'Why I adopt this creed,' or 'am enrolled amongst the adherents of this form of church government,' 'why I am busily engaged in this direction, and in that have neither place nor part,' we shall be neither foolishly vociferous nor dumb, and we shall follow Jesus not like the fickle crowd, whose hosannahs of to-day will be cries of Crucify Him to-morrow, but like the true disciple, who can tell Him, "we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the son of the living God!"

III.—*Resolutely* too, our Master desires that we should follow Him. This should be the legitimate result of an intelligent enquiry into the whole subject, that our purpose of obedience is not only wisely made, but firmly fixed; but there is need to press it, nevertheless, for it is one thing to see the right, and quite another thing to resolve to do it. If there were no special difficulties in the way, our natural enmity to God would make the following of Christ not easy, but there are special difficulties that discipleship presents for the overcoming of which a holy resolve is the one thing needful. What would the martyrs and confes-

sors of the early church have been without this? Where would have been those spiritual victories of the first preachers of Christianity, those bold battle strokes upon iniquity that Christ's heroes struck, those pitiless rendings of the vestments of imposture, those challenges to submit to Jesus that His undaunted heralds sounded before Sin's gloomy prison, those mighty shakings of the Gates of Hell? How could the religion that hardly knows its own mind do this? What triumphs can vacillation boast of? What laurels crown the brow of Half-heartedness? Dear brethren, what we want is Purpose, holy Purpose, God-inspired, God-directed Purpose, that, born of Calvary, and baptized at Pentecost, shall answer, when the Saviour puts the question, "Wilt thou follow Me," not with the stammer of half formed purpose, "Lord I think so," but with the clear ring of an inflexible Resolution, "Lord I will!"

IV.—*Humbly*, too we ought to follow Him.

Yet this is not the crouching servility of the slave. Though He be a master, and we His servants, He does not call us bondmen. Our service is a free service, freely rendered, and graciously received, and the spiritless and mechanical obedience of slavery is at the very antipodes of ours. A humble, but not a cowed, a lowly, but not a lifeless service we ought to render, such as is consistent with such words as

> "O thou Almighty Lord
> My Conqueror and my King,
> Thy sceptre and thy sword,
> Thy reign of grace I sing,
> Thine is the power; behold I sit
> In willing bonds before Thy feet."

We are to follow Him, remembering how it has come to pass that we follow Him at all, from what depth of degradation we were lifted, out of what mire of transgression we were raised, how we can never say anything more than Paul, "But I received mercy," how since that unspeakable gift we have been full of failings, and negligences, and ignorances, and how, except by our taking this way that He has trodden before us, there is no hope of our ever being bettered at all. Thus, not with the fearsome glance and trembling footstep of Bondage, but with the open eye and elastic tread of Liberty, are we to follow Jesus, humbly remembering as we tread in His footsteps

that He is the Vine, and we are the branches, that He must be ever the Master, and we the servants, that it is His to order, and ours to obey, and not forgetting that but for His sovereign mercy we had still been reckoned among the despisers of His goodness, or it may be, in that yet more miserable company whose day of privilege has ended in dark, trembling, hopeless, everlasting Night!

Again He wants us to follow Him

V.—*Confidently*. What a blessed thing it is to have a guide that you can trust! Blessed enough for that belated wanderer. Tired and faint he longs to reach his home, but has missed the way, and the dark night covers him alone on this pathless moor. The wet wind moans dolefully about him, and chills him as he stands and peers into the gloom for a light. O how glad he is when some friendly voice, to his cry for help, answers, "Turn to the right here, and then follow me, I'm going your way. I know the path you want: follow me!" Blessed enough to this hardy climber who, searching for mountain flowers, has wandered far up amongst the rocks until the mist has caught him. White and silent it creeps about him as if it listened to his heart beat. Is he so high? He hardly knew it. A yard that side, and then sheer down! A yard or two on the other, and just the same. To go higher is to make bad worse. To go lower seems impossible just now, when lo, from round a jutting crag appears, the well-known form of a mountain shepherd seeking stray sheep among the heights. "Follow me," he says, and first up and then down; now on a narrow ledge, and then round a projecting buttress; now slipping round a grassy slope, and then plunging through the wet moss, he leads him into safety. More blessed still to this believer, upon whom mists of uncertainty have descended, and whom manifold perplexities surround. The way he treads has led him into difficulties. The sunny sky of yesterday is covered with heavily rolling clouds. The winds that whispered then, now come in gusts, and rage and roar about him. The path that was across the daisied meadow now leads him by the side of quaking mosses, and now through desolate ravines. The brook that laughed and smiled about his footsteps, is now the torrent leaping from the heights with sound of thunder, and the flowers that blushed

a welcome to him are exchanged for the unfriendly thistle and the leafless thorn. O how blessed then, when every step seems perilous, and every hour reveals some new perplexity, when Jacob's murmur rises to his lips "All these things are against me," and Satan's vile suggestion is hissed into his ear, "Back again for safety and for rest," to detect the footprint of the Saviour, and to see Him on before him beckoning to follow. Straightway his courage comes again. "My Saviour leads me," cries the inspirited disciple; "I ask no more. Away, ye flocking fears! Jesus, with me, I can take no harm! Courage my faltering heart, if Christ goes on before thee, thou need'st not fear to follow! Thou hast the Lord of all things leading thee; bravely after Him! The way's the right one, though it be rough and thorny. Onward to its ending, and bethink thee that

> "By thine unerring Saviour led,
> Thou shalt not in the desert stray;
> Thou shalt not full direction need,
> Nor miss thy providential way,
> As far from danger as from fear
> While Love, almighty Love is near!"

I think Jesus wants us again

VI.—*Closely* to follow Him. Our great danger is the following Him afar off. To bring us to consent to this, Satan will ply us with the utmost force of his temptations, for he knows that it may not take much to change a following at a distance into a not following at all, but let us look at this dark device, and see its meaning. 'Afar off' means feebleness; but 'closely' means power. 'Afar off' means uncertainty; but 'closely' means clear vision. 'Afar off' means doubt; but 'closely' means full assurance. 'Afar off' means peace that is unsettled, and joy that is fugitive; 'closely' means peace that passeth understanding, and joy that is full. 'Afar off' means sympathy that is incomplete, fellowship that is partial; but 'closely' means walking in the light as He is in the light, and fellowship one with another. 'Afar off' means exposure on the battlefield; 'closely' means hiding in the pavilion. 'Afar off' means watching him among the multitude; 'closely' leaning on his breast at supper. 'Afar off' means Peter stammering out "I do not know the man;" 'closely' means Peter rejoicing that he is counted worthy

to suffer shame for His name. 'Afar off' is Demas loving this present world; 'closely' is Paul counting what things were gain to him loss for Christ. 'Afar off' means "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death;" 'closely' means "Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory;" and if 'afar off' is Balaam putting up holy petition, and yet dying in the dark, 'closely' is Stephen crying with transfigured countenance, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God!" Which shall yours be, on this day of choice for the year?

VII.—*Patiently*, too, I think the Saviour desires us to follow Him. For the way besides being rough is sometimes long and tedious, and we "have need of patience." This is one of those good things whose goodness is only partially acknowledged. It is a grace that wears homely garments, that disguise its royalty. It goes hand in hand with Faith, and with it is heir to the exceeding great and precious promises. There are not many things that can be done without it. Faith may strike the spade in deep into the soil; but patience keeps on digging till the whole is done. Faith sets us running the race that is set before us; Patience keeps us running till we reach the goal. Faith makes us seek another country, that is a heavenly; Patience keeps us looking out for home. Faith enables us to utter the bold challenge of David, "I come to thee in the name of the Lord of Hosts;" but Faith and Patience are needed before we can say with Paul, "Nay in all these things we are more than conquerors." Faith enables us to build on the one foundation; but Faith and Patience are required before the topstone is brought on with shouting. Faith starts us on our heavenward voyage; but Faith and Patience are called for before He bringeth us to our desired haven. You have need of Faith to enable you to submit to the divine requirement, and to see its eternal recompense; but you have need of Patience also that "after you have done the will of God, you might receive the promise." This last word, promise, reminds us that Jesus would have us

VII.—*Hopefully* follow Him. Discipleship hath a rare expectation, and the Master would have us cherish it. It is true that the immediate future is not a cloudless one.

The way we go will not be all sunny. The world will not love us any better because we follow Jesus. The lurking lion of the pit will often roar upon us, as we pass along. In the fight of faith we shall have to endure hardness. A living Christ-like soul will not save us from the pain and weakness of a frail and dying body, nor can we expect to be freed from the sorrow of bereavement, or from the manifold burdens under which "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together." But beyond all this, for probation is not for ever, what is it we see? What is it we hope for? For safety, brethren, for the perils of probation will be past. For sinlessness, the white apparel that the precious blood shall cleanse. For Rest, after the toilsome journey, undisturbed and endless. For Day, after the long darkness, in which our "Sun shall no more go down, neither shall our moon withdraw itself; and after the storm and tempest, for a peaceful calm. For clear vision, that doubt shall no longer torture, nor mists of perplexity bedim; and for perfect life when "this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality." What do we see, dear brethren? No more the First Adam's likeness, "of the earth, earthy," but the stamp and image of the Second, spotless and divine. No more "the husks that the swine did eat," or the poisonous dainties of the World's providing, but a celestial banquet at which the glory and honour of the nations are gathered, and He that sitteth on the Throne provides the cheer. No more the desolate wastes over which God's exiles wandered, but the Father's house

"That one, that only Mansion,
  That Paradise of joy,
Where tears are ever banished
  And smiles have no alloy.
Where with jasper glow the bulwarks,
  Where the streets with emeralds blaze,
Where the sardius and the topaz
  Unite in it their rays;
Where the ageless walls are bonded
  With amethyst unpriced
Where the saints build up the fabric,
  And the corner stone is Christ!"

What do we see before us? No more a blinded world pouring its vile reproaches on the good, whom, with insane effrontery, it counts among the filth and offscouring of all things, but an enlightened heaven, where the royalty of

goodness is acknowledged, and the righteous shine forth like the sun. No more the toilworn sower going forth with tears, but the smiling reaper come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him. No more the field of warfare, where the Goliath of Iniquity marches, and principalities and powers are arrayed, but the Paradise of love, where

"They who with their Leader
Have conquered in the fight,
For ever and for ever
Are clad in robes of white.
Brief life is here our portion,
Brief sorrow, short lived care;
The life that knows no ending,
The tearless life, is there.
O happy retribution!
Short toil, eternal rest!
For mortals and for sinners
A mansion with the blest!
And now we fight the battle,
But then shall wear the crown
Of full and everlasting
And passionless renown:
And now we watch and struggle
And now we live in hope,
And Sion in her anguish
With Babylon must cope.
But He whom now we trust in
Shall then be seen and known;
And they that know and see Him
Shall have Him for their own.
The morning shall awaken,
The shadows shall decay;
And each true hearted servant
Shall shine as doth the day.
Then Christ, our King and Portion,
In fulness of His grace,
Shall we behold for ever
And worship face to face!"

And now, dear brethren, let me ask you what your answer shall be to this command of Jesus? What shall yours be, little child, just learning the difference between right and wrong? What shall yours be, youth or maiden, to whom life is opening its mystery, and whom temptations are beginning to surround? What shall yours be, man of the ready footstep and the busy brain, whom Business is claiming as its vassal, and for whom the love of money sings its bewitching song? What shall yours be, feeble traveller over life's thorny way, whom sickness weakens, and manifold infirmities impede? What shall yours be, who have passed the limit of maturity, and over whose wrinkled forehead rise the blossoms of the grave? Let me put the question clearly. If you do not follow

Jesus, you follow Satan, for "he that is not with me is against me." Which shall it be? "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve." Shall it be the tyrant that enchains, or the master that cherishes? Shall it be the mocking liar, or the True and Faithful Witness? Shall it be the base assassin, or the Lord of Life? Shall it be the skulking thief that will rob you of all your treasures, or the Princely benefactor who will make you rich for ever? Shall it be the Branded Enemy of your race, whose promises deceive, and whose kisses kill, or the Friend of Sinners, who would have all men to be saved? Shall it be the Devil, whose work is drudgery, and whose wages is death, or Jesus Christ whose service is perfect liberty, and whose reward is Heaven? Now make your choice; make it in the presence of God; make it as one who may have no other chance of making it, and make it now! And be sure it is the right one! O make that right choice now, and while you hear the Saviour saying, "Follow thou Me," in the strength of God bid sin and Satan an everlasting defiance, and let the resolution of to-day be the purpose and practice of the year. I need not say it will be to you then a very happy one, and when the years all finish as they soon must, the fellowship of this following shall become Communion for ever and ever!

SERMON XII.

SOUL WINNING.

"*He that winneth souls is wise.*"—Proverbs xi, 30.

THIS emphatic Scripture suggests four questions which I shall try to answer to-day: First—Is there any necessity for winning souls? Secondly—What is the precise object of winning souls? Thirdly—What method of winning souls should be adopted? and Fourthly—Are there any special encouragements to undertake this work of winning souls? And now—

I.—*Is there any necessity for winning souls?* Not if souls are as they ought to be? Apart from any scriptural teaching on this subject, what is the impression made upon you by a survey of the actual state of things as they exist around you now?

1.—What of the merely *physical* conditions in which souls are found to-day? Some live in comfort it is true. Large and airy dwellings shelter them. Pure air blows about them, and green leaves often dance before the windows. Taste and order, and elegance, and cleanliness, rule within; and without anxiety or struggle there comes day by day the daily bread. But what of others? What of the long rows of houses that straggle near the coal pit, or lie beneath the factory chimney, or start up with suspicious quickness in the city suburbs, or stretch their weary length in what are called the low parts of the town? I mean those places where the bricks have given way, and the beams have yielded; where a room holds a family, and a house a tribe; where the air is foul and rank and poisonous; where white faces go in and out of rooms; where misery hides, and sickness groans and

shivers upon its bed of straw. What of these places filthy with neglect and age, and reeking with pestilential odours, whose landscape is the stuffed window and the broken rain spout, or the irregular outline of the opposite wall; whose glittering stars are the twinkling gaslamps at the corners, where the sunshine filters slowly through the dun vapour, and over which the heavy smoke spreads its funeral pall. What of these places? Are things as they should be there?

2.—What of the *intellectual* condition of men? The greatest differences prevail here too. Some few men think as well as eat. Well chosen books stand upon their library shelves. Some high class journal or magazine lies upon their table. They hold converse with the mighty dead; or perhaps their intellectual fare is varied by the trenchant logic of the controversial essay, or the suggestive facts of the scientific review. But what of the others, many in comparison? Do they think? Have you ever looked at this question, especially as it regards the lower orders of society? Have you marked the dull eye, the animal countenance, the vacant look, the brutal expression of many of these. Have you noticed what sort of literature they prefer, what pictures please them, what reasoning stirs them, what sort of oratory they applaud?

3.—And what of the *religious* condition of our countrymen? Better than it used to be certainly; better than it was when men adjourned from the church on Sundays to play at football on the village green; better than it was when gentlemen were hardly thought to be gentlemen if they went sober home to bed; but a long way from what it ought to be yet. Who attend your places of worship? Where do they live? What proportion do they bear to the rest of the population? Where are all the rest? Do they never come to the house of God? How is it in London, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Glasgow, or your own town? How many in the street where you live are regular worshippers? Did you ever try to count them? How many ragged skirted women sit and gossip at the doorstep, instead of praying in the church? How many youths, loud voiced and insolent, wander away into the fields to gamble? How many idle and unwashed workmen stand and smoke at street corners, or trace out the playbills in

the spirit shops, or drink and quarrel inside, as soon as that legalized abomination can begin? Or how many of all sorts make the Sabbath an opportunity for frivolity and sin of every kind, and outrage the sweet sanctities of the day that God gave for the solacement and blessing of the world? Are things as they ought to be?

4.—And what of the *family life* around us? What can it be, what must it be in many cases? Decency is frequently impossible from the places where they live, or rather herd together. And what of truth, fidelity to principle, admiration of what is excellent, abhorrence of what is mean and false? What of obedience to parents, of love of neighbours? What of meekness and gentleness, of patience and forbearance, of tenderness and charity? How can such flowers grow in such a soil? How can such graces flourish in such an atmosphere! Alas! they cannot, they do not as many a wretched family in —— to-day can bear witness, where prayer is never mentioned, where God is never worshipped, where coaxing and cursing are the frail props of the only government there is, and where parental authority is a question of which can utter the vilest blasphemy, or strike the heaviest blow!

5.—And what of the *social life* that is connected with all this? What of the bickerings and heartburnings, the smouldering Etna fires of anger, the murderous belching forth of evil passion; what of the low cunning, the long continued cruelty, the selfish meanness, the drivelling folly; what of those amusements that never refresh, those excitements that never elevate, those friendships that never refine, those companionships that never strengthen, those pleasures that never satisfy? Are things as they ought to be? Is there any necessity for this work of winning souls?

6.—Then look a little further and think of the gaol statistics of the country, of the disclosures of the law courts, of the army of paupers that surround us, of the vagrancy and violence and vice that like three vultures prey upon the vitals of the nation, of the shocking records of prostitution, of the vast number of men and women whose daily calling is theft and roguery, of the hordes of children growing up around us in ignorance and sin, and of the

miserable host of both sexes, and of all classes who wear the drunkard's shameful and bedraggled livery, and doubly dying, fall at last into the drunkard's grave. Think of all this—of the dimness in which they are now, and then of the darkness in which they will be. Think of the misery in which they now are, and the despair in which they shortly will be: think of the slavery of to-day, and the damnation of to-morrow; and then say whether there be not a necessity for some scheme of mercy that shall try to enlighten them, some crusade of godliness that shall be organized to comfort them, some ministry and apostleship that shall proclaim "liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." Perhaps that rather anticipates the answer to our second question:

II.—*What is the precise object of the work called winning souls?* What they are to be won from, we know. What are they to be won to?

1.—*To thinking*, first. To deep, serious, religious thinking. "I thought," says one whose experience is worth remembering, "on my ways, and turned my feet unto Thy testimonies." That is the invariable order: thinking first; obedience afterwards. Do you remember any conversation like this when you were amongst the mountains? You said to your friend in the morning, "Let us climb Helvellyn or Scawfell to-day." "Not I," said he; "what do I want with such breakneck excursions? Isn't it fine enough down here in the valley? You may go if you like, but I like level ground and safety." "Well, so do I," you replied, "but just come to this window and look up. The mountain top glows in the morning sunlight. See the rare colours of those rocks! Watch that little stream that dances down from that majestic shoulder, all in a tiny rainbow where the spray catches the sunbeams! See how those jagged edges stand out against the blue; and look, a wreath of vapour curling round the cairn, as if loath to leave it! There will be a splendid prospect: will you go?" "Well, yes," said he, "it looks well up there: I think I'll go." Is it not like that with sinners? Who doesn't remember when he said, "I think I'll go," in another and blessed sense? Down in the low grounds of carnal security he had never looked about him much, never

looked above him, never thought. But Divine Mercy came to him, and got him to think. He thought of life and its purpose; of death, and its mystery; of duty and truth, and wisdom, and folly; of sin and sorrow, and time and eternity; of the grave and the Judgment seat; of holiness and happiness; of Christ, and Heaven, and God; and as he thought of his iniquity, and remembered his danger, he said, "I will arise, and go to my Father." Thinking first.

2.—*Perhaps hearing next.* God has appointed the hearing of His word to be a means of grace to men, and sincere enquirers after Him will easily be led to use it. We may be thankful that in comparison with our fathers the lines are fallen unto us, in this respect, in pleasant places. The word of the Lord is preached now not by few but many, and comes "not in word only, but in power, and with the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." A great step has been taken when a formerly careless sinner has learnt to present himself in the sanctuary, and with reverent thoughtfulness to enquire at the oracle of God, but more remain to be taken.

3.—*Striving after God* is a step further on still. It is almost sure to come to this, if a man will take those other steps. Nay, is it not certain that it will come to this, according to that Scripture, "then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord;" or according to the familiar adage of the gospel, "to him that hath shall be given." Then prayer will rise from those once proud lips, the tear of penitence will bedim those haughty eyes, the sword of godly purpose will begin to hew in pieces the Agag of besetment, the standard of rebellion will be lowered, sighs of contrition will take the place of songs of sinfulness, and erelong you will see him standing in the temple, smiting in holy sorrow on his breast, and groaning

> "The sinner's only plea,
> God be merciful to me."

If you ever rejoiced in hope, you may then, when the penitent sinner is knocking at the door of mercy. Well you know that that door cannot long withstand such blows. He may not be actually out of the Devil's clutches, but Satan is losing his hold of him every moment. The storm of sin may not be over quite, but the clouds are visibly

lifting, and fair weather lies close beyond. He may not be quite within his father's house, but he can see the light of the household fires playing red on the windows, and another step or two will see him across the threshold, the Eternal God his refuge, and underneath the Everlasting Arms!

4.—And now *what is that other step* which, if you can persuade him to take it, will place him in safety? What remains to be done before it can be said that another soul is won? He thinks, he hears, he prays, he struggles; what more must he do? Already the light of hope fitfully brightens in his eye. Foretastes of the coming blessedness give him a momentary comfort. Strange thrills go through him as of a deliverance near. Yet he is not at peace: yet he feels the fretting of his fetters: yet he groans beneath his burden. Ay, and he must do, until you bring him face to face with the Atonement, and he learns to say, renouncing every other trust but one,

> "In my hands no price I bring,
> Simply to thy cross I cling."

When you have brought him to the cross, you may safely leave him in the hands of his Redeemer. For thought has led to hearing, and hearing to praying, and praying has become a struggling, and struggling has issued in trusting; and now, instead of storm, it's sunshine; instead of bondage, liberty; the lost sheep lies upon the shoulders of the shepherd, and the lost Son is safe and sound at Home! We have now to consider

III.—*What methods of winning souls should be adopted.* The weapons of this warfare are not carnal, therefore certain means of influencing men that have been used in the ruder ages of the world only need to be looked at, to be rejected with abhorrence. *Lying* will never help us in this work, though it have the authority of councils and popes without number. If we cannot speak the plain truth to men, better never to speak at all, for Satan cannot cast out Satan. Nor will *flattery* help us. It is only a weak device this for any purpose. A man who has any common sense about him can tell when he is flattered, and can estimate the honeyed compliments at their true value. *Bribery* will not be much better. It is quite true that we are to do good to the bodies as well as the souls of men to

the extent of our ability, but we have need to remember that material considerations may easily become positively damaging to their receivers, and degenerate into a mere premium paid to mercenary going the regular and looked for wages of an unreal profession of religion. If we have loaves of bread and fishes to distribute, let us remember, while we give them, that though blankets and clothes at Christmas time may fill our sanctuaries with worshippers, the men and women to whom these are the main arguments for their religion will never be better than religious hummers, and that what we want is to win them not so much to comfort as to Christ; and let us order our almsgiving accordingly. As for the *rougher* side of this coarse mode of persuading men—I mean, threatening—I need say nothing more than that a goodness which can only be obtained by whipping is of little worth, that the field in which it can be used is becoming narrower and narrower every day, and that the time is fast coming when neither minister, nor magistrate, nor squire, nor landlord, nor employer, nor any one else will be able to use it at all. Besides men that are worth anything won't be dragged into a religious life either by cajolery or threats. They feel that they are neither schoolboys nor cattle, and refuse to be charmed by such measures, charm you never so wisely.

Rising above this we come to the *emotional* nature of man. If we cannot hope to convert a sinner through his stomach or his skin, may we through these higher faculties? I should think a wise worker for God would never allow this side of human nature to be forgotten in his plans of attack. Scripture truth is evidently designed to influence men through their passions. Without the judgment be convinced, indeed, any moral work that is based on the mere excitement of the emotions will almost certainly come to nothing, but our appeal must be made to the whole man, and our chances of succeeding with the regal judgment will be much greater if the lesser authorities in this human kingdom are challenged and attacked at the same time. But let us never forget that, whatever else is attempted, the *Judgment* must be won. Whatever plan of attack is proposed as regards the heart, the understanding must have special attention. Men are

intelligent as well as emotional beings, and God asks from them a reasonable service, and we who try to persuade them to it must never lessen or lower the original demand. An important auxiliary in this work is *the distribution of religious tracts;* not anything that is printed that has a smack of piety about it, but well selected, vigorous, evangelical, and, in these days, shapely and neat tracts; for many a working man would think you had a poor opinion of his judgment, if you were to give him the coarsely printed, badly illustrated, childish productions of a much earlier age. Even in this, great delicacy is often required, for the giving of a tract may be wrongly construed. For men sometimes won't think of your motive, but they will recollect your manner, and it is quite possible for a good thing to be awkwardly done. I need hardly remind you that you have it in your power to *influence others by your letters.* You can write to some with whom you have no opportunity of speaking. Of course, if you write, you will sign your name. As a rule anonymous letters, even about religious topics, are best put into the fire at once. It is open to many more of you to *use the living voice for Christ's sake.* Nay, where is the man who is debarred from using it? It is impossible to discuss now all the ways in which christian men can speak for God. It is clear that in this direction all cannot take the same stand. There are those who cannot enter the pulpit, and to whom platform speaking is denied; to whom also it is not given to speak in the yet more homely and private services of the church, but there isn't a man among you who may not make his ordinary conversation a means of good to others. And, dear brethren, I want to say to you that in whatever other respects we prosper and advance, the true ideal of church activity will never be realized until every one among us, according to his opportunity, becomes a witness unto Christ, and to the extent of his ability becomes a winner of immortal souls, and waiting not for other orders than those of brotherhood, or higher commission than that of charity, goes out to preach of Jesus, his ordinary speech charged with the electricity of goodness, and seasoned with the salt of God.

If this idea of the absolute necessity of every true christian doing all he can to save men from sin be fixed

in your minds, I have little fear as to the right manifestation of it. Your first attempts will be at home, for you will see it to be a folly and a wrong to till other fields when your own lies barren round you, but you will not, cannot confine your activities there. Some of you will watch in daily business for an opportunity of speaking of the holier trafficking, and some of you in forge, or factory, or farm, will talk of the enduring treasure, and the fadeless glory. Some of you will try by wise measures of prevention to make straight the ways of the Lord, and some of you will march in upon the territory of evil, and with the gospel trumpet of entreaty and appeal will sound an alarm, either in the homely cottage, or the plain mission room, or mayhap beneath the canopy of Heaven, where your only pulpit will be a rude chair, your choir the gruff voices of the street, and your organ accompaniment the blusterous winds. And some more of you whom grace and gifts shall qualify, will enter the ranks of the separated ministry, and, leaving all of earthly business behind you, will study to declare continually the gospel of the grace of God. This only being settled and resolved upon, that you must be and will be witnesses for Jesus, the manner and the measure of the witness may be safely left to the charity that fulfilleth the law; for whether it be by pecuniary contribution, or by bodily or mental labour; whether it be intercession in the sick chamber, or remonstrance in the street; whether you gather the lambs in the Sabbath school, or feed the sheep in the sanctuary; whether you blow the ram's horn of vigorous exhortation, or the silver trumpet of eloquent appeal; whether you argue with philosophers at Athens, or fight with beasts at Ephesus; whether with the scholarly Apostle you reason of righteousness, temperance and judgment to come, or with the untutored Evangelist declare that the chaff shall be burnt up with unquenchable fire; whether in the Gospel feast you marshal and supply the coming guests, or fired with a Christlier chivalry, rush out into the highways and hedges of humanity to cry, "Yet there is room;" if only the love of Christ constrain you, your very feeblest offering shall be accepted, upon your humblest endeavour Christ will smile, and the all glorious Spirit shall utter in your heart that sweet evangel of all willing workers,

"Forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord!"

IV.—*The encouragements to undertake such a work* cannot now be more than hinted at.

1.—As regards yourselves *what work can afford you purer pleasures?* The charm of social intercourse, the delights of home and family, the joys of literature, the sense of power over your fellows, the keen excitement of the lawful chase for wealth, the incense odours of applause, the thrill of music and of oratory, or the unearthly rapture of the mountain landscape—what are these by the side of the joy that comes of soul-winning, that divine luxury of doing good?

2.—And yet again, there is about such work as this an *admirable bracing for the moral health.* For those who are afflicted with spiritual dyspepsia there is hardly such a tonic anywhere as this. Oh! if those christians who are troubled with chronic feebleness, with occasional fits of grumbling and fretting, and general languor and sickliness, would but take a course of the medicine of trying to make others better, or have a spell at the work of soul-winning, they would hardly know themselves again in six weeks. There isn't a drug in all the range of christian pharmacy that so quickly charms away the starting fears of religious weakness as this—of trying to save sinners. There isn't a cordial anywhere half so potent as this for bringing back the elasticity of health to your spiritual system, and knitting your flaccid muscles into power. Try it, brethren. Not the sea bathing of an entire summer will set your body up more certainly, than a few plunges into the sea of iniquity that seethes around you, to try to bring up drowning sinners, will invigorate and brace the soul.

3.—And think of *the glorious possibilities* of the work. The soul you rescue may have within it the makings of a noble life. Feeble by reason of its bondage now, the touch of liberty will awake it into power. Unsightly in its rags to-day, to-morrow may see it clothed in bright apparel, and radiant in the beauty of holiness. O think of it, and try to save them, these who only want salvation to make them men—men who mayhap will sing like Isaac Watts or Charles Wesley, or write like holy Rutherford

or Richard Baxter; men who will pray like Bramwell, or preach like Samuel Bradburn or Robert Hall; men of untiring benevolence like John Howard, or of consummate tact like Jabez Bunting; men of regal fancy like John Bunyan, or of seraphic saintliness like John Fletcher; hewers in God's forests like Francis Asbury, or tillers of the home field like William Carvosso; missionaries like Judson, or martyrs like Latimer; senators like Wilberforce, or soldiers like Havelock; statesmen like William, Prince of Orange; evangelists like George Whitefield—flowers these, not unfit for angel hands to gather; jewels that the Lord of angels shall set in His many crowns!

4.—And then *it lasts*, does this work. For when the wealth you have amassed is squandered, and the estate you had acquired is vanished away; when the mansion that you lived in is in ruins, and the laurel leaf that crowned you is withered; when goodness is the one enduring treasure, heirship unto God the worthiest position, and likeness unto Christ the only acknowledged royalty; when the graves open at the Resurrection, and the trumpet of doom sounding through the startled universe proclaims the end of all things earthly, and that even Death shall die; when the hay and stubble of merely temporal works blaze, the gold and silver of your spiritual labours shall abide the test of the fire; the happy souls that you had helped to rescue shall gather round you with a gratitude no words can measure; in your crown of life shall flash the bright inscription, "Winner of Immortal Souls," chiefest of honours in the heraldry of heaven, and from that seed you sowed on earth shall spring a harvest of Glory that you shall reap for Ever, and for Ever, and for Ever!

SERMON XIII.

THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE.

"Again the kingdom of Heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.—Matthew xiii, 45-46.

MY message to you to-day, is of buying and selling. I come from One who cannot be here in person, to say that He has a commodity of inestimable value to dispose of, and He will be glad if you will buy it. I am to say likewise in His name that He considers this an opportunity not to be lightly set aside, that it will be to your undying advantage to come to terms with Him immediately, and that he is very willing to consider the case of even the very poorest, so as to bring this great blessing within the reach of you all. At the same time, He does not expect you to become purchasers, without having the fullest opportunity of examining what it is He wants to sell you, and perfectly understanding what price you will have to pay. So I may say at once that He is a seller of jewels, rich and rare, and knowing that many of you have long been on the look out for goodly pearls, He has sent me to say that He has the very thing you have been seeking, and would like to let you have it upon easy conditions. It is a pearl, one pearl—"one pearl of great price." What do you say to becoming His customers? Would you like to look at this pearl a little longer before you decide? Then you shall, and I will do my best to show it to you.

I.—*The great value of this jewel.*

But stop—do you know my Master, the owner of this pearl? It is He whose are the gold, and the silver, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. It is the Lord of the winds and the waters, who giveth sunshine and rain, who speaks the worlds into being, who appoints the sun his place of going down, and studs the canopy of night with stars. It is He, who in the fulness of time came down and tabernacled amongst men, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, and crowned with glory and honour because, by the grace of God, He tasted death for every man. It is He who from His throne at the Father's right hand is from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool. It is He who is ever crying by His Spirit in sinners' hearts, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Jesus has this pearl to sell you, and wants to treat with you to-day. But the jewel, you say. Well, I hardly know where or how to begin to describe it. For one thing, it needs a particular condition of mind to thoroughly appreciate it, and perhaps some of you may lack that. Fancy anyone all aglow with the healthy excitement of a clamber among the hills, coming down to tell his friends in the valley what he has seen up there. He says :—"I saw like another world around me. The earth grew bigger as I ascended, and bigger still. The hills you see, first grew low, then level, and then sank down and were forgotten. And I saw gorges, dark and deep, damp with perpetual torrent spray; and bare ridges, fretted into peak, and rift, and chasm by endless storms; and lonely tarns, lying like mirrors to the blue; and mighty crags, torn and shaken and caverned, and thrown into such fantastic form as if a race of giants had begun to build, but were not able to finish, and left their mason work behind them rough hewn and awful. And I saw peak on peak around me rising steeply to the sky, and I saw the clouds rushing and retreating round them like roes the hounds of God were chasing, or standing with ordered front, as if they were ministering spirits watching holy ground, or clinging, huge and pall like, about the summit, as if the hill I climbed were another Sinai, and within those dread pavilions, like another Moses, I was about to talk with God!"

I say, fancy his telling them all this, and then to his surprise hearing them mutter of excitement and delusion and rhapsody, and asking whether it were not better that he kept to the plains in future. Little more of the rare visions of that mountain could he say to such an unsympathetic audience. And yet all that he said was true, though they couldn't receive it. So I have much to say about this precious jewel of True Religion, but perhaps those I want to say it to the most, will with difficulty understand it. And yet you care for right and truth, do you not? You are not indifferent to the great question of Duty, are you? It is of some importance to you to know what your relations are with the Great Being who gave you life, and who will one day call you to judgment, is it not? And yet, say what I may about this jewel, I cannot worthily describe it. But let me tell you something about it now. If you get this pearl, you will have *pardon too.* Haven't you much to be forgiven for? Is not the record of wrong doing a very long one! When you try yourself by the standard of the Word, don't you feel how far short you are of what you ought to be? If you begin to reckon the times wherein you have failed in duty, don't you presently grow sick with the awful computation? Wouldn't some of you be glad to go anywhere to get a pardon, if going would get it; to undertake the longest pilgrimages, to suffer the severest hardships, if that were the way to find it? Well, if you will buy this pearl of great price, you shall have pardon, a conscious pardon, a most free pardon, an abundant pardon, a pardon for sins of omission and sins of commission, a pardon for sins of thought, and sins of word, and sins of deed, a pardon for great sins, and vile sins, and inexcusable sins, and long-continued ued sins; that you shall have, and

> "Pardoned for all that you have done,
> Your mouth as in the dust you'll hide,
> And glory give to God alone,
> Your God in Jesus pacified."

Those who get this pearl get *freedom too.* Along with this burden goes the bond of iniquity. Surely there are no fetters so heavy as those sin forges for a man. How tight they hold him! How inexorably they keep him down! How vainly he struggles to escape! How awfully

real is this slavery! How many groan beneath it, slaves of passion, slaves of pride, slaves of intemperance, slaves of lust, slaves of unholy ambition, slaves of avarice, slaves of lying, slaves of blasphemy, slaves of a vile timorousness, slaves of blinding unbelief, slaves of a maddening irritation never soothed, slaves of foolish desires that gnaw, and gnaw, and gnaw, like harpies, never satisfied! Wouldn't liberty be glorious to such as these? Would it not be a boon to you, if you, unhappily, are so enslaved? It shall be yours if you will buy this pearl. Sin shall not have dominion over you. Its miserable tyranny shall be finished, and its intolerable shackles shall be broken, and the Angel of the Covenant shall bring you forth from your doleful prison house, and breathe into your opened ear the law of your new-found liberty,—"Go, and sin no more."

Then you shall have *new and holy desires and aspirations*. It will be to you an awakening and stimulus of all the mental powers such as you hardly dream of now. Your present condition is like that garden in the depth of winter. Here and there mayhap some venturous plant just peeps above the ground. Some hardy evergreen defies the frost, but the grass is low and thin and brown, and the shrubs shake their thin arms like skeletons, and the little pool is ice-bound. But come again in summer. What a change! The same garden, but not the same! All the beds are bright with flowers, the lawn is like a piece of velvet, the trees and shrubs are dressed in living green, and toss their branches as if in glee, the water there lies and smiles as if in deep contentment, or ripples as if the wind had told it secrets, and it must laugh for joy, and the air is full of Nature's incense! Is that like a certain familiar scripture, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new?" Oh, but it shall be like your life when God drives away the winter of iniquity from you, and breathes His eternal summer into the soul. You may think from this that you will know Him then, and so you will. *Conscious friendship with God* shall be your portion. You will understand Him then as you cannot now. Instead of some mysterious shadow, dreadful, resistless, eternal, He will be to you a Person, near and dear and trusted, and best seen in His Son. Instead of a tyrant, he will be a father. Instead of

some awful Deity, seated on a throne of Judgment, and flinging His thunderbolts of vengeance far and wide around Him, you will think Him an indulgent Friend, communing with you from above the mercy seat, who guides you in perplexity, who comforts you in time of trouble, who

> "Keeps with most distinguished care
> The man who on His love depends,
> Watches every numbered hair
> And all his steps attends."

Moreover you shall have *freedom from the unrest and dissatisfaction of sin.*—I don't mean that you will always find everything exactly as you would wish it. That is impossible in a state of trial such as ours. The machinery of life will certainly move much more easily with you, but you will never be able to forget that it is but machinery, yet you will be delivered from that perpetual jar, and jolt, and grating that you knew before. The restlessness of a life without God, the uneasy apprehension, the spasmodic clutching at passing pleasure, the never ceasing question that is muttered by the aching heart, "who will show me any good," the weary tossing and turning of an existence without a purpose and an aim, the ever recurring pang of disappointment as some fresh bubble of pleasure or amusement bursts, and the long, long waiting for a vision of joy that is ever tarrying—all this you will lose, and discover that the same hands that have brought you into liberty can also lead you into rest.

And yet again, you will have *power to bless men.* Christless to-day, it becomes a serious question of what use you are in His great universe. Bringing forth no fruit of holiness, how far is it right to say that you are cumbering the ground? Not heartily for Christ, are you not against Him, and if against Him, can you be really for His people, and for the world for which he died? If you do not seek to hinder men from holiness, can you be said to help them to it? If you do not seek to put out the lamps of the other virgins, can you be said to help to keep them lighted? But if you buy this pearl, there will be no doubt as to which way your influence shall tell. You will be able then, and yet not you, but Christ that liveth in you, to do veritable work for God. I may not promise that it shall be great or marvellous, sung by bard, or praised by wondering watchers,

but it shall be true and blessed, and it shall be no slight joy to you, on that day when all work is re-examined and rewarded, to hear the Lord of all the labourers say of your unnoticed toiling—"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." And then you will have a *good hope* beside. At present you are without hope in the world, because you are without God, and to the extent you are so. For what is the hope of the man who persistently, and with his eyes open, rejects the Saviour? What part has such a man among the holy? What place among the blessed? For such a man to hope for a happy immortality is presumption. It is a baseless hope. And yet how many have no better hope than this! They hold to their sins, and yet hope for Heaven! They flout the Saviour, and yet hope to be with Him for ever! They count the blood of the covenant a common thing, and yet hope to stand amongst those who are washed in it! But such shall not be your hope if you buy this jewel. It shall be a bright hope, a good hope, a sure and certain hope, a glorious hope that, like some sun that never sets, shall span all the storms of life with its celestial rainbow, and breaking forth at last from all mist and shadow, shall pour upon you the light of full fruition in a broad, perfect, everlasting Day.

This is a faint showing forth of the pearl of great price. What do you say now to buying it? Are you not ravished with desire to obtain it? Do you want to know the terms on which the Owner will part with it? Then let me tell you

II.—*What you must do to obtain it.*

The parable says, "a merchant man when he had found one pearl of great price, went and *sold all that he had*, and bought it." "The kingom of heaven is like unto a merchant man" &c., says the Saviour, so we must take care how we interpret here. We may set it down as beyond any question that the gift of God cannot be purchased with money. We can bring no equivalent for it to Him, that would make the transaction a real buying and selling. Pardon can never be purchased. Nevertheless there is something in the action of this merchant that resembles what takes place when a sinner obtains salvation. What is that something? You see it in his going

and selling all that he had in order to buy it; giving all diligence, straining every nerve, making every sacrifice to become possessor of this pearl. It is just putting into another form that old scripture—"Ye shall seek me and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." This is absolutely indispensable, nor can we stir a step towards this heavenly business, except in this sense we are willing to sell all. But still more particularly: *we must part with all our evil habits.* Some of them we shall perhaps be willing to sacrifice at once, but our corrupt hearts will make a strong fight to retain at least one or two. It is useless discussing this with ourselves. God has settled it for us long ago, that, if we cherish only one sin, we cannot be saved, inasmuch as he who keeps the whole law, and offends in one point, is guilty of all. If there is one thing that we know to be wrong that we will not forsake, it is useless asking forgiveness. In such a condition we may pray till we die, but God will never hear us. How can He? Such a prayer is a mockery of Him! Satan himself would say Amen to such a petition! A gospel that would offer pardon to a sinner who would not give up sinning, why all the fiends around him would delight to preach it! Over such a repentance Hell itself would hiss an infernal Hallelujah, and all the demons shout with horrible joy! No, we must sell all, part with all,

> "Turn at once from every sin
> And to our Saviour turn."

Many sinners have a large stock of self-righteousness which must be got rid of somehow. They are not so bad they think as they are made out to be; indeed they hardly know at times whether they are bad at all. They can tell a good many very good things they have done, and though many of them often say "Lord have mercy upon us, miserable sinners," they don't half believe it about themselves. Mentally they may be said to make great capital out of their excellencies. One says, Well, I may be a sinner, but I'm not a thief." Another, "I may be a sinner, but I'm not a liar," or "I'm not a glutton," or "I'm not a swindler," or "I'm not an hypocrite," I'm not close fisted," "I'm not living on other people's money," "I'm not a drunkard or tippler," "I'm not a swearer," "I'm not a Sabbath breaker." It is like a strong castle into which

they retreat from the assault of the truth. It is very hard to get them out, but out they must come if they want to be saved. They think it valuable property. It is mere rubbish that must be all parted with, all sold, for Jesus Christ will never save a man while he thinks he can save himself; but when he is willing to confess he cannot, and that Jesus must save him, or he will be utterly and irrecoverably lost, then does the Lord Jesus show him that he shall be gloriously and everlastingly saved. Duty sometimes calls to give up friends and companions for Christ's sake. It must be done, if they hinder us from God. We are sometimes also called to leave certain situations, and give up certain employments, and surrender certain gains, because they cannot be kept or continued or enjoyed with a clear conscience, and a man who is honest with his Maker will never be long in doubt as to what he ought to do. To sum up: we are to part with nothing that is really worth the keeping, but with our indifference, our prejudice, our sins, our self-righteousness, and everything else that cannot be kept without violating conscience, opposing the plain declarations of Scripture, and hindering us in the way to heaven. When we come to this point—all for Christ—then the pearl is ours. Humbled into nothingness that trusts Jesus only, we are straightway lifted into power. Being willing to "count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord," we discover that everything is gain. Finding out at last that in ourselves we are "wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked," we discover that in Jesus we are prosperous and happy and rich and clear-visioned and royally apparelled. The pearl we have been seeking for is ours for nothing, and so is fulfilled the promise of that ancient prophecy, "Ho, every one that thirsteth! Come ye to the waters! And he that hath no money! Come ye, buy, and eat! Yea, come, buy wine and milk—without money and without price."

A word to those of you *who have* this treasure. Keep it. Beware that you *do not lose* it by sinking into spiritual drowsiness. See that you do not fall into the error of Bunyan's pilgrim, who slept in the arbour, and lost, for a time, the roll which should have been his pass into the celestial city. *Sell it not.* If you part with it for any con-

sideration, you must be the loser by the bargain. The highest possible price that anyone could offer you would be no better than pebbles offered for gold nuggets, or broken shells for bracelets of diamonds. Let no one *filch* it from you. Many an attempt will be made to rob you, and not in play either, except such play as the eagle has with the hare, or the wolf with the lamb. Therefore do as the goodman of the house, who knows not at what hour the thief may come, and watch. A word to those *who have scoffed at it hitherto.* Make trial of it before you laugh at it as worthless. The sneers of ignorance are of little worth. Your condition now is not so happy that you can afford to throw away any scorn on anything, and this you don't know yet. Try, before you condemn.

A word to those *who had it once.* It is of no use wasting time by saying you have made a bad bargain. You know that only too well. The best thing for you to do is to make enquiries as to whether the pearl can be regained. I am glad to be able to say that it can, but you have no time to lose in going to "them that sell."

A word to *intending purchasers.* The sooner this heavenly bargain is struck the better. If the terms suit you—you know them now—close the business at one. You have a rare chance in your hand now. Don't throw it away. It will be the making of you, if you use it well. Of some it is true that their opportunity is gone. Yours remains to-day. Use it. Use it now! He in whose charge the pearl is waits to receive you. The place of this Divine Business is the Throne of Grace. Go to meet Him there, and let this be the language of your heart,

"Could my tears for ever flow,
Could my zeal no languor know,
These for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and Thou alone:
In my hand no price I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling."

To this spirit that has nothing but Jesus to cling to, none but Jesus to trust in, all shall be given, and your experience shall be,

"'Tis done, the great transaction's done,
I am my Lord's, and He is mine;
He drew me, and I followed on,
Charmed to confess the voice divine.

Now rest, my long divided heart;
Fixed on this blissful centre, rest:
Nor ever from thy Lord depart,
With Him, of every good possest!"

SERMON XIV.

ADVICE TO RACERS.

"*So run, that ye may obtain.*"—1st Corinthians ix, 24.

THE Christian life, says the Apostle is like a race course, and every christian is a man running for a prize. In such a race many start, but only one can win, and he that wins, wins only by dint of certain rare and excellent qualities that mark him off as superior to all competitors. Study that successful running, he seems to say; there are wholesome lessons in it, and aim to make yours of such a sort that, in your holier contest, you likewise may be crowned. "So run, that ye may obtain." Let us give ourselves to that study: let us try to learn those lessons to-day. I think there can be no doubt that we must

I.—*Run heartily.* An undecided, hesitating, half-hearted state of mind will certainly not help us to gain the prize. It seems strange that such a state of things should be possible, but it is so. Not in the beginning, indeed, of the christian course. To be half-hearted then is an insuperable barrier to a man's ever entering it. He that is not willing to give all his heart to Christ, so far as he then understands it, can never be saved at all. And doubtless, whensoever a man consciously withdraws from that holy compact, his salvation is put in peril, nay, forfeited; but apart from that conscious resumption of the gift that was upon the altar there is apt to creep upon us by almost insensible degrees, a spirit of slumberous and self-pleasing indifference. We, are apt to lose the old fervour and zeal, and sink into a listless and lifeless performance of outward duties. From that, at times, we are roused into temporary excitement and activity, but it becomes sadly evident we are not the men

we used to be. We may still hold by the familiar formulas of belief, and maintain some kind of conformity with church order and practice, but spiritual comfort is very fleeting and intermittent, and we sometimes feel that it is more than doubtful whether we have any joy and peace in religion at all. Of course this state of spiritual feebleness will issue in spiritual death, if it goes on. It may be that in some cases death has actually come before we knew it. But in all, there is the gravest reason for anxiety, and a loud call to the racer, who is being robbed of his spiritual eagerness and spring, to bestir himself, and start afresh for heaven. It is impossible to say at what time in the enfeebling process the irresolute racer actually stands still, but it is very clear that, except some vigorous stop be put to it, his giving up will be only a question of time. It is clear that in that direction we have absolutely no chance of the crown. Success to us lies at the opposite point of the spiritual compass, that is, in running with all our heart. It is wonderful how our comfort in the running—let alone our chance of succeeding—is enhanced by this heartiness of consecration. A man who has made his mind up to a thing can endure hardship with comparative ease. Look at your mountain climbers. Your traveller that doesn't mind about it very much, but goes for company's sake, is weary in a mile or two; grassy slopes turn him giddy; stony tracks twist his ancles; the height beyond height knocks the heart out of him, and he gives up at the first shower; but your true lover of the hills, who has made his mind up to stand upon the summit, counts these things trifles. It is so with christians. Half-hearted disciples have but a poor time of it on the whole. Temptation has a powerful hold on them. Their No to the Devil's whispers is apt to be so faint, that it is no wonder at all that Satan tries them again and again. Their standing among the servants has such an uneasy look about it, as almost of necessity to make someone say "Surely thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth," and then there sometimes follows the miserable story that did in that case. What they want is more heart. You have sometimes seen a vessel coming into harbour stick fast upon the bar, and you've heard the sailors say she hadn't any way upon her, and you remember how slowly she seemed to be moving

If she had had some of this "way," it would have carried her right over the bar, but having none, she grounded. Now that's the thing we want to get us over our spiritual difficulties; spiritual "way"—godly zest and zeal and enthusiasm—and then these harbour bars wouldn't trouble us so much. Why they tell us the same thing about horses. "If you want to save them from stumbling," they say, "keep them going at a good pace. They always trip when they're sleepy." We also trip when we're sleepy. A little thing can often upset us then. We never slay lions and bears, like David did once, when we're in this miserable state. The mere suspicion that there is a lion in the road is almost enough to make us run away. O wretched weakness! Talk of fighting the good fight! Why we have only to see the spears glittering in the distance, and we feel inclined to throw down the weapons and fly. Our brother, who has given all his heart to the work, can stand his ground, confronts the foe, finds they are not half so bad as they looked, defies them like David did Goliath, and presently tramples them, spears and all, under his feet, and marches on singing:

> "For the Lion of Judah shall break every chain,
> And give me the victory again and again."

But we—we have a hard time of it, and if we get through at all, it is barely through. Our sword is broken and our shield is pierced, our helmet is hacked and our colours are torn, and we hardly know whether we are the conquerors or they are. O brethren, we want heart in this service; heart in this fighting; heart in this running; heart in this life! Let us try and get it. Let us act like men who have given all to the Lord Jesus, and are going with Him, come storm or sunshine, wherever He goes. Don't let us act like men who have two strings to their bow, who have provided for contingencies, and who may possibly find it to be necessary to reconsider their plans. Don't let us consider what we shall do in case of failure. Poison lurks in the very mention of it. There is no need to fail. The discussion of it brings on a kind of mental paralysis. Let us take the word, and erase it from our vocabulary. Not failure but, by the grace of God, success! Don't let us be like yon hesitating voyager who says, "Now if this thing shouldn't succeed, you'll see me again by and by.

Let us be like this man who has sold his goods, and disposed of his business, and packed up his baggage, and gathered his family, and got on board the vessel, and shouts to the watchers on the shore—"Good bye for ever!"

Let us also

II.—*Run cautiously.* It may not be needful to dwell on this long, but it would be wrong to forget it. The dangers and difficulties of the way are so great, and the issues of the struggle so tremendous, that it would be the height of folly to attempt to run without it. It is certainly possible to exaggerate the principle until it becomes morbid, but if there be heart first and foremost, caution may be cultivated with positive profit. Indeed heart without caution will itself be dangerous just in proportion to its development, as vigour, without wisdom to guide it, sometimes makes disaster all the more glaring. The incautious woodsman who only chips with his axe may cut the skin if he miss his aim, but he will probably sever a limb, if he is in good earnest. The careless skater who is only gliding quietly here and there, when he hears the ominous crack, crack, that says the ice has broken, may save himself, but if he is going at full speed in that direction, he will very likely be in the water before he can stop. Heart, Vigour, Resolution, are admirable companions on a mountain excursion when allied with Caution, but if Caution be left out, they may lead you into desperate danger. And Heart is good, emphatically good, in this higher business of ours, but we must know what we are doing, as well as be vigorous in the doing of it, if we are to succeed. Otherwise Vigour will turn to Rashness, and we shall do things at haphazard instead of wisely. The haphazard style may do very well for a man escaping from a prairie fire, whose only chance is to ride for his life, but it will not do for those who are fleeing from the wrath to come. They must know where they are going and how and why, or they may never reach the place of Refuge at all. And surely if the fact that a man has embarked a few thousands of gold and silver in some secular undertaking is held to require and justify the most careful consideration, how much more should they take heed unto their ways who have risked their all in this holier venture, and whom success will lift so high, that

a nation's treasure will be but as the dust on which they trample, and failure will so degrade and beggar, that Lazarus at the gate of Dives will seem a crowned prince beside them!

Let us moreover

III.—*Run Prayerfully.* This is an indispensable element in all successful running. A man might as well expect to paint without colours, or build without materials, or fly without wings, as to get to Heaven without prayer. Nothing will make up for the want of it. It is like the principle of life within us. With that principle, we are men and women, thinking, acting, hoping, fearing, rejoicing, suffering, making character, shaping destiny; without it, we are lumps of clay, having form, and weight, and colour, but of no more weight and influence in this world than the rotten trunks that have fallen in the forest, or the wave-washed boulders that lie tumbling on the shore. Prayer is like the bread of our souls. With it we grow strong and broad-chested and supple-sinewed and quick-visioned. Without it, we pine, and wither, and pant, and tremble. Prayer is like the meat Elijah found, when the angel touched him in the wilderness of Judah. Forty days and forty nights strode the prophet in the strength of it, until he came to Horeb; and there have been times when, in the strength that came to them from the touch of another Angel, for thrice forty days and more, believers in Jesus have travelled to the mount of God. Nothing can make up for the want of this secret communing of the heart with God. Meetings cannot, reading cannot, preaching cannot, giving cannot; even spiritual labour cannot. All these become unspiritual, if they be prayerless. Communion with God is the very lifeblood of the system. Impoverish that, and straightway languor comes, disease comes, and by and by, death. But strengthen it; enrich it by holy habit, by the "praying always" of apostolic prescription, and in the best sense, health is the result. Men are strong to labour. Trifling burdens don't fret them. Care somehow looks more and more like comfort. Duty loses its sense of drag and drudgery, and is more than half delight. Difficulty becomes the stimulus that adds a zest to triumph. Even trouble brings them such immediate help that they learn to say with the Apostle,

"we glory in tribulations also," and Death, dark and dismal, death is so robbed of its terrors, that they talk of it as a departure, or the quiet falling of the traveller, journey-worn and weary, amid the sunset shadows into a dreamless sleep.

It is important likewise that we

IV.—*Run Trustfully.* It is something like an axiom on the earthly racecourse that you must have confidence in yourself, if you are to succeed. The very reverse of that must be the practice of those who run towards Heaven. One of the boldest of the lines in their directions for the course runs thus, "He that trusts in his own heart is a fool;" and there is another a little way below it, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not to thine own understanding;" and there is another, short but deeply underscored, "Without me ye can do nothing." Let no one imagine this means a weak and insipid character. The truth is, though the wise men of the world will be slow to see it, that this profound reliance on another is the very basis and nourishment of the noblest lives that have been ever lived. Trust in Jesus is not only the destruction of shame, it is the death of feebleness, and strange as it may seem, the men who have most felt their own weakness have been the most signally clothed upon with power. Nor let anyone think that the faith here spoken of is no more than the acceptance of a catechism, or the profession of a creed. Catechisms and creeds are useful enough, but you only assent to them; you never trust them. It is a personal trust in a living Christ, as real and living and near to us as when Peter cried to him on the surges of Galilee, "Lord, save me, or I perish," or when the mothers of Judea brought their children to Him, and "He took them up in His arms, put His hands upon them, and blessed them." Trust in such a Christ means Triumph. Instead of extinguishing exertion, it inflames it. Instead of putting the stammer in the speech, and the dimness in the eye, it makes even the dullard eloquent, and gives the blind to see. Unbelief is paralysis, but Faith is energy. Unbelief drags the wheels from off the chariot, and makes it drive heavily, but Faith can give wings to the laggard, and make the feeble strong. To Unbelief, every Philistine that shows himself is a Goliath, great and

terrible, but Faith can watch a thousand of them marching shoulder to shoulder, and defy them all. Every shadow has an ambush in it to the eye of Unbelief; the rushes by the pools are lances, the sound of a shaken leaf has danger in it, but Faith sees danger only in transgression, hears danger only in iniquity, and goes on securely though the heavens fall. All difficulties give way before it, all obstacles vanish. To use the imagery of the wondrous Dreamer, while Unbelief waits at the wicket gate musing on the perils of the pilgrimage, Faith has passed the portal, and is striding up the hill Difficulty. While Unbelief is turning back because there are lions in the way, Faith goes up and finds them chained; and while Unbelief stands upon the brink of the river shivering with fear, or gets ferried across to find destruction, Faith has met the shining ones upon the other side, and gone in through the gates into the City, to be for ever with the Lord!

Let us endeavour also to

V.—*Run Patiently.* On this point you will remember the exhortation of the Apostle, "Let us run with patience the race which is set before us," and you will be able to enter into the meaning of that other scripture, "Ye have need of patience." It is even so. The race will not be run without it. It is not the pastime of an hour, or the occupation of a day, but the arduous labour of a life. The difficulties that Faith has vanquished to-day will present themselves again to-morrow; the cross that has been somewhat lightened by communion with God will be laid upon our shoulders again. The dangers from which we have been delivered will beset us again and again, and we shall have need of patient continuance in well doing before we can have the final victory. Let the greatness of the issues involved stimulate us to the cultivation of this grace. Let the example of the toilers round us, who, for objects that in comparison with ours are but as molehills unto mountains, patiently strive, move us to patience. Let the memory of the blessed dead—nay the blessed living! —who through faith and patience inherit the promises encourage us to its exercise. Let the thought of the encompassing cloud of witnesses, who, from some high place in glory, watch us as we near the goal, who them-

selves were patient ere they grasped the prize, incite us to follow in their footsteps; and by and by the vision that had seemed to tarry will surely come, and the Faith that had watched and waited for its coming shall in no wise lose its reward.

And also

VI.—*Run Hopefully.* Hope is a most important factor in the great result of our salvation. We are saved by it, says the Apostle in that great chapter in which he describes the privileges of the royal priesthood: "we are saved by hope." Who doesn't see the force of it? Salvation by hope is taking place around us every day. What keeps the fingers stitching yonder in the garret, and the feeble frame alive from day to day, but hope of recompense when labour is done? What keeps the mother watching over her sick child from week to week from absolute exhaustion, but hope of rosy cheeks and sparkling eyes once more? What sends the farmer out into his fields before the dawn, and keeps him working long after sunset, but hope of smiling harvests presently? What gives new vigour to the weary foot of mountain climber, but hope of standing on the sunlit summit, and viewing the landscape o'er. What keeps the slow dull tread of the caravan across the dust-swept and torrid desert from becoming the halt that means destruction, what—but hope of the bubbling watersprings when day is done? What saves the sailor, caught in the fierce grasp of the storm, from leaving rope and rudder, and lying down upon the deck to die, what—but hope that the wind will cease, and he may make the harbour? We also in the fierce storm of trials and temptations are saved by hope that by and by, through infinite mercy, we shall get beyond the sweep of the hurricane, and out of the swell of the billows, and anchor in quiet waters by the Eternal shore. Let us try to keep it! Let us count Despair a foe, a traitor to our truest interests, never to be allowed a moment's resting place in our heart. Let us cherish Hope as a kindly friend and stalwart helper who may abide with us for ever. I charge you that you put away Despair. It will do for you in your higher undertaking, what it does for the children of this world in theirs, sap the strength, benumb the resolution, paralyze the activity, poison the

pleasure, relax the harpstrings, and smite the very soul into a deadly sickness. O put it away, if you care at all to win the prize. Hope on, and hope ever, leaning upon Jesus only, and you shall presently obtain. Wherefore not, dear brethren? Is the struggle difficult? It is not impossible. Is this holy living hard? But it would be harder to perish in your sins. Have you many foes? But you have more friends than enemies. Do you only see, like the prophet's servant, the Syrians encompassing the city? O look again, and

> "To faith's enlightened sight
> All the mountain flames with light!
> Hell is nigh, but God is nigher,
> Circling you with hosts of fire."

But you doubt yourself, your own ability to stand. You have need to do, but never doubt your Saviour. But I may leave Him. So you may, and so might harvests wave in winter, or the perpetual hills sink down into the plain, but neither is likely, and He can keep you from leaving Him. Is he not "able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy?" Hold fast your hope; it will never make you ashamed. Don't think you honour God by a spirit of despondency. You will please Him far more by the rejoicing of the hope. Your life then, instead of being feeble and nerveless, shall be bright and beautiful, and leaving your dearest hope fixed in that eternal morrow, you shall be the better able to endure the temporary hardships of to-day.

And now think all of you—you that are struggling in this racecourse, and you that only watch—of what this race must end in. Thing of the misery of being beaten in it; think of the joy of triumph. Think of the bonds on that side, and the binding of the brows with garlands on this. Think of the fiends that crowd about that goal, and the shining ones that wait with welcomes here. Think of the cursing, and the crowning; of the gnashing teeth, and waving palms; of the everlasting punishment, and the life eternal, and resolve to run for Heaven. You that have hitherto aimed only at the rewards of earth, begin to-day to live for the nobler recompense. And you that have sometime started, run on. You that have halted, start again; and all of you, looking only unto Jesus, heartily, cautiously, prayerfully, trustfully, patiently, hopefully, run so that ye may obtain.

SERMON XV.

COUNTING THE COST.

"*For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it.*"—Luke xiv, 28.

IT was a sunny time just then with the Prophet of Galilee, and the shadow of the Cross had hardly fallen upon Him. The people were flocking about Him in great multitudes, and to human eyes it seemed as if the world were running after Him. But to those Divine eyes that could see both the evil and the good, it was not altogether so. Much of this apparent popularity was unreal. Many of those who went after Him from day to day were led by unworthy motives. Many more followed with only heedless steps. They had hardly thought of what discipleship would involve, or had only too easily fallen in with the general notion of their countrymen, that the Messiah was to be a temporal Deliverer, and that to follow Him was to march to victory. But that would never do. Discipleship that had no firmer foothold could never tread the rough path that He must go on. To follow Him thus unintelligently could only lead to disgust and desertion when the bitter truth of the cross was known, and those who saw it would only mock these shallow-hearted disciples for their foolish start. They must know the truth, so He turned and told them it, saying "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple." And then as men who had a tower to build, or an enemy

to encounter, he bade them, before they laid the foundations of the building, or unfurled the flag of battle, to sit down and solemnly and deliberately count the cost. That commandment He repeats to all intending disciples to-day, and as it would be a strange thing if, in such a company as this, there were none who meant to follow Him, it may not be unprofitable for us if, for their sake in particular, we once more consider

What it costs a man to be a christian.

I.—Let us begin with the lowest ground—*Money.*

It may safely be affirmed that it will cost him something. Towers cannot be built without expense, and christian discipleship will involve it too. A man cannot easily become a christian without an open and practical connection with some part of Christ's church, and this will involve bearing his part in the financial burdens of that church. That there must be such burdens is manifest to everyone who thinks, and it is right and just that the members of that church should bear those burdens, each man according to his several ability. And many schemes of blessing, philanthropic and charitable, will appeal to him for aid, begging earnestly from the christian, where they would have let the worldling go. And distress wil cry to him then as it cannot now, and poverty will bid him be willing to distribute, and sickness will lay its trembling hand upon the purse strings. It will cost him something surely. But it will never tax him. If the old heart went with him into the new life, it might be a tax, but God gives a man a new heart when he becomes a christian, and part of the law written on that heart is—"It is more blessed to give than to receive." That is no tax that is willingly given. It is not even reckoned cost by souls that live in the sunshine of God's love. And tax or no tax, what are the demands of godliness by the side of those of sin? Religion requires no man to spend three-fourths of his wages at the public house. It is not a demand of discipleship that he shall have his children go barefoot and his wife starve. Christ bids no man leave a clean and comfortable dwelling, to go to live in some frowsy cellar, or some freezing attic. It is not a demand of holiness that he shall fling away the wages of a month in an hour or two of debauchery. God commands no one

to waste on one night's fashionable gathering what would have kept him in comfort for half a year. No one is compelled for Christ's sake to keep up appearances in the streets, though he has dry crusts in the cupboard, and duns knocking at the door. No one is called for the truth's sake to launch out boldly on the sea of speculation in the bark of other people's money, and by and by pay so many pennies in the pound.

God doesn't make such demands as these, but sin does, folly does, sensuality does, making haste to be rich does, friendship with the world does, ay, and more than these. Many a family could be found that would have a good long sum to reckon up, if they had to say what it had cost them to serve sin. Talk of the cost of religion! There might have been, there was, some force in this, when to confess Christ was to be cast out of society, and to have all your property confiscated, but there is none at all now. Say that it makes some new demands upon a man; are there no old ones it destroys? If it asks us to give where we have never given before, are there no extortionate voices that it silences? If it digs new channels in which the streams of our bounty may flow, are there no old courses that it dams up entirely? If it does bring its pitcher to the fountain, are there no marauders that it drives away? Brethren, believe it, on the lowest ground it is profitable for a man to be a christian. Judged by the money test, it is better to serve Christ than Satan. It is often so as regards the mere number of the coins a man possesses; it is always so as regards the comfort of them; and even if the old days of fire and faggot came again, it would still be profitable; for if we were homeless for Christ's sake to-day, to-morrow He would bring us to a mansion; and if we were beggars for a moment, He would crown us Kings for evermore.

The mention of those old days makes us think of another item in the reckoning that it might be well for us to look at.

II.—*Pains and Penalties.* In former times this was a very considerable item in the calculation. There was before every disciple of Jesus an almost certain prospect of suffering for His sake. So soon as it became known that he had espoused the cause of the Crucified, that instant the

world counted him its foe, and pointed all its artillery of persecution against him. If he were only scouted and despised, he might consider himself fortunate. That heritage rarely failed him. But he might look forward to the spoiling of his goods, the breaking up of his home, and sometimes, when the children of the Evil One waxed unusually wrathful, to standing before rulers and councils, and sealing his testimony with his blood. Nor was the cost the lighter when you remember that to die for Christ's sake did not merely mean to die, but often to die by torture, slow torture, ingenious torture, fiendish torture. It was so in the earlier history of the church; it has been so since; but how is it now? Greatly changed, indeed. Died out so far as this country is concerned, let us hope never to rise again. Your sum is a short one, you who are asking how much it will cost you in this respect to be a christian. This is like one of those streams that the traveller near mountain ranges knows, that only runs in stormy weather, If he must journey in December, it becomes an important question how he must cross it, but he can walk over it dry-shod in June. It is so with us, brethren. Those of us who look can see the place where our fathers in the gospel passed in the winter, but it has been summer weather now for many a day. We need think nothing of it now, only pray God the boisterous weather may not come back again. Things have looked somewhat threatening of late years. Clouds have gathered about the hill tops, and there have come, from one place and another, portentous whisperings of storms. Yet let us hope the sky will never again be covered with Popish thunder-clouds, for if they break amongst our English hills, depend upon it this stream of Pains and Penalties will be full once more.

Let us count the cost again as to our

III.—*Pleasures.* It is probable there are some of these that we shall have to give up. "You will indeed," says the world, "and very many of them too. This religion is a melancholy thing, a grievous thing, always ready with a caution, or a prohibition, or a commandment. It is full of restraints and scruples, bristling with thou-shalt-nots, and laying its ban on every piece of harmless fun that it can see. It may be good enough to die with," says the world,

with a semi-sceptical leer on its shameless face, "but you'll have a sad time of it, if you take it now. It will cut you off from society, and banish you to vestries, and enquiry rooms, and penitent benches, and chapels, and churches, and instead of innocent diversions, you'll have a round of meetings, and singings, and readings, and preachings, and prayers. If there is to be a pleasant party, you mustn't join it. If some jovial spirits want to spend a pleasant evening at the public house, you cannot sit with them. You mustn't go to this entertainment or that dancing room. You mustn't watch the horses race, or the clowns practise, or see the actors on the stage, or hear the music in the singing saloon, or tread a measure in the ball room, or read the last exciting novel, or join the merry fellows who toss the dice or cut the cards; but you'll have to be sober and grave faced, attend solemn meetings, read good books, go and talk to people about their souls, and generally make yourself as miserable as the day is long." Here the world, like the Devil, sometimes quotes Scripture, and often says when it sees someone not far from the kingdom of God, "Count the cost!" It may be saying so to some of you just now. There's no objection to our counting the cost even at such instance, but we must have the right figures, and these are not right. They are not unlike Popery: that is, there is some truth in them mixed with a good deal of error. What does the world say? That religion is a melancholy thing? Alas for its dullness then, if it imagines that to be thoughtful is to be in trouble, and that if a man is happy, he will have a perpetual giggle on his face. I suppose if christian men slapped each other on the back whenever they met, or burst into a loud laugh every few minutes, that then they might be considered happy. Away with such rubbish! If the world knows no better than this, we mustn't listen to it for a moment. The world is like a painter that has an unfortunate twist in his eye that spoils everything he does. "Paint a portrait of Religion for us," say the young. "Here it is," says the world, holding up a miserable thing full of frowns and wrinkles. "No; there it isn't," says Experience. "That distorted thing is not the religion of Jesus Christ." There is no likeness at all, except in the sense in which a palm tree is like a syca-

more, or an elephant is like a horse. Both are trees, and both are animals, but there is no likeness beyond this. And the world says that Christ's service is a thing of Thou-shalt-nots. Even if it were, is it any the worse because it says, 'Thou shalt do thyself no harm?' Is that family any the worse where the children are told they must not play with razor edges, or take poison, or thrust their hands into the fire? Is it unkind to visitors when the lord of the manor builds a wall on the edge of a precipice in his estate to keep them from losing their lives? Is it unduly strict to say to the merchant, 'Thou shalt not store gunpowder near the furnace fires?' Or to cry to the oarsman just setting off for a row, 'Thou shalt not launch thy boat above the cataract?' And what if Religion does condemn certain diversions that the World makes much of? It condemns nothing that is really good. That men enjoy these things is no proof that they ought to be encouraged. A certain class in society greatly enjoys seeing what it calls a good stand up fight between two men, but ought the brutalities of the prize ring to be therefore established among us? Some men gain a feverish enjoyment from the gaming tables of the continent, but ought we therefore to set up similar establishments in London, or Liverpool, or York? Besides, what are the consequences of these things that Religion prohibits—the consequences now? Nothing noble, nothing inspiring, nothing elevating, nothing happy; but heartache, disappointment, fretfulness, lassitude and bitterness of spirit. Who can pretend that that is unwise or unkind that prohibits these? And what hereafter? Why what, but everlasting banishment from the Saviour's presence? And will men talk still of Puritanical strictness and scrupulosity, in face of such a tremendous consequence as this? Will they clamour to be let alone in their pleasure, if this is what comes of it by and by? If those pleasures are truly innocent, they are not condemned. Christ is no cynical misanthrope that likes to see His people live in sadness. It is not His aim to make His service as unpleasant as He can to them. If the pleasure be a healthy pleasure, a pure pleasure, a worthy pleasure, let them have it, and rejoice in it—that's the Divine law—but if not, let them forsake it. There it is: if it be really good, keep

it; if it be bad, forsake it. If it be compatible with health, and happiness, and holiness, and heaven, then let that be yours; rejoice in it, and hold it fast; but if not, even though it thrilled every fibre of your being with ecstasy, abhor and renounce it for ever!

As regards

IV.—*Friendships* also, it will be well to count the cost. The Saviour warned us long ago that His coming upon earth would often produce division and not peace. Households would be divided, and so would friends because of Him, He said, and so they are. And this must needs be, for when in any company or household Christ comes to be acknowledged as Lord, and trusted in as Saviour, by one, but rejected by the rest, what can follow but disunion? Men cannot walk together except they are agreed, and divergence of thought and feeling here overshadows all minor agreements. If one man is for Christ, and another is against Him, there is an end to all true friendship between them. If to this He is unspeakably precious, and to that of no more importance than a name on paper, how can they be agreed? If this one loves and trusts Him, and that cares nothing at all about Him, what communion can there be between them? The courtesies of life there may be, there ought to be; the kindly attentions that are born of christian charity there must be; but beyond this, there is a great gulf fixed between them, that every true christian feels it would be dangerous and disloyal to pass. But these also, like our pleasures, are not to be cast adrift on light and frivolous cause. It is only where the old communion is manifestly inconsistent with devotion to the new Master, that it must be forsaken. Even then, the parting will be in sorrow more than in anger; in a deep and passionate regret that they will not come to Jesus, but it will and must be a parting. As regards the great landmarks of morality, the application of this law is easy. Honest men cannot consort with thieves and gamblers. Lovers of truth cannot make friends of men to whom truth or falsehood is a mere question of convenience. Men to whom temperance is a Divine commandment, cannot sit and booze with drunkards. Those to whom chastity is not so much a thing of expediency as of right, cannot walk and talk with the lecherous crew that call uncleanness

gaiety, and seduction an achievement instead of a crime. And as regards those who live with outward show of virtue, it is still not difficult to apply it. The trifling, and careless, and worldly can hardly be the chosen companions of the servants of God, and he holds his Master's honour lightly, and his own safety cheaply, who will ever consent to have them so. These live on a lower level than the Christian, and to walk and talk with them means, either you raise them to your level, or they pull you down to theirs. For his disciples to company with such for Christ's sake is one thing, blessed and honourable, but companionship for any other reason, for their wit, or cleverness, or fluency, or accomplishments, or any family and temporal advantages is another thing, dangerous to our own well-being and disloyal to our Saviour's crown.

Once more let us count the cost with regard to

V.—*Reputation.* If the world may speak once more, it will have bitter things to say, when it knows a man has become a christian. In one place it will call him canting, in another stupid. In one house he will be dubbed a knave, in another a fool. Here they'll call him superstitious, there priest-ridden. To-day they'll vote him a nuisance, to-morrow a bore. One time he'll get the name of hypocrite, another the name of madman. And I don't think we can pretend that it is altogether pleasant to be so belied, but I'm sure we can afford it. For who are they that will so speak about us? They are those who do not really understand us, and whose opinion we need take very little notice of. If some stickler for the old stage coaches, who had never been a dozen miles from home in his life, called railways a delusion, would it make them so? If some one, whose earthly soul never rose higher than the wages table, averred that Tennyson's poetry was mischievous trifling, would it make it so? If some deaf man were to say that Mendelssohn or Handel knew nothing about music, would anybody who had ever heard their magnificent choruses care one straw about it? If some blind inhabitant of Patterdale or Grasmere were to swear there was nothing to be seen from the summit of Helvellyn, who that has gazed from that dark brow upon the hills and valleys round would listen to him for a moment? Or if some poor drunkard there, whose taste

for God's pure water has been all destroyed, were to laugh at us for drinking of the rivulets that flash and foam adown its riven sides, who that knows the taste and sparkle of mountain streams would drink one drop the less? And when men to whom the cross is still a scandal, and conscious pardon but an empty dogma, and the privileges of sonship an unsealed book, presume to cast their ridicule upon the heirs of heaven, who that knows the bitterness of sin and the bliss of God's abundant pardon, should care one moment for it? It may not be pleasant to bear it, but it would be pitiful to yield to it, and worse than pitiful, if, to avoid it, we denied our discipleship, and to gain the smiles of a crooked and perverse generation, were content to part with the treasure of a quiet conscience, the hope of the angels' greeting, and the promised Well done of the Lord!

And now I think you have something like an idea of what it will cost you to become a christian. Does it seem excessive? You have an idea of the burden of discipleship; does it seem too heavy to bear? Surely not! Look at it once more. You give up nothing but sin; you gain salvation. You part with nothing that is worth the keeping; you receive an everlasting treasure. It will cost you something in money, nothing scarcely in pains and penalties, something in pleasures, something perhaps in friendships, a little also in reputation; and for that comparatively trifling cost, you will purchase to yourself the joys of salvation on earth, and the glories of heaven by and by. That is, if you on your part will give up all for Christ, He on His part will give Himself all to you. Now what say you to entering at once on this holy work, to embarking in this business, to purchasing with a price that is not money, that which after all is not sold. Is not the blessing worth the venture? See, you give up a flint; you get a pearl for it. You throw away shreds of wretched rags; and you dress in gorgeous apparel. You root up an ear or two of blighted wheat; you reap leagues of golden harvest fields. You won't hear the hoarse chanting of some strolling ballad singer, and you listen to the hymns of the seraphim. You part with a paltry village farm; and you become lord of a province. You give up the rubbish of the streets, and have royal dainties. You fling away a diadem of tinsel, and receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away!

SERMON XVI.

THE HORRIBLE PIT AND MIRY CLAY.

"*I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord.*"—Psalm xl, 1-3.

IF these words had not made you still, I would say, Hush! at once, for they are words of no common order. It is not a fool who utters them, prating about something he does not understand. It is not a dreamer telling of the fancies that tossed and rolled about him in the night visions. It is not a poet taking wild license with a truth that stirred him somewhat, and setting it out before us in distorted outline, and fantastic colours. It is not some lazy ecclesiastic droning out a round of weary platitudes about morality that he only half believes. It is not some pious enthusiast whose zeal has got the better of his knowledge, and has led him to call a trifling thing tremendous, or describe a molehill as if it were a mountain; but a wise and large-experienced thinker dealing with a truth of truths; a richly gifted prophet speaking soberly about the things of God; one of the foremost men of his age describing the turning point and crisis of his life, the most important incident in his history. Therefore let us listen while King David tells us in his own way his wonderful tale.

"I waited patiently for the Lord," he says, "and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay."

I.—*What pit is this he speaks of?*

I see the more correct rendering is "pit of noises." Where or what was this miry clay? Was it some pit that he had known when Saul chased him all day long among the hills, at Hachilah, or Ziph; some cavern like Adullam; some convenient hiding place like Engedi? There were noises enough in some of them no doubt, specially when the wind was high outside, and the plash and roar of hidden torrents, and the surly growl of wild beasts, that made their lair inside, made fitting answer and accompaniment to the wild shrieking of the storm. Is it some deliverance in such fearsome place not chronicled heretofore that he is talking of? And miry clay too? Ah! he was stumbling about in such wretched lodging to get better foothold for his slipping feet, or to escape the drip, drip, drip, from the creviced roof above him, and from the treacherous stone he plunged into more treacherous clay, soft and heavy and clinging and cold—was that it? Some incident of his life at Ziklag, or those wild days spent in the wilderness of Maon? No: it was quite another kind of pit, and quite another sort of clay. The noises that he heard were not of beast or stream or storm, but angry passions raging in miserable human souls; Satanic suggestion and impulse rousing the echoes of the God deserted heart; the vain follies and fancies of a world lying in wickedness. The noise of anger, for instance, and of passion, threat, and scream, and curse. The shrill laughter of the scoffer, who imagines he has a case against religion. The grievous howl of envy and jealousy; the moans and murmurs of hope deferred; the shrieks of remorse; the gnashings of teeth over thwarted plans and poisoned pleasures and embittered plenty. The coarse and brutal shoutings of intemperance; the empty rattle of vanity; the ribaldry and rant of licentiousness. The noise of promises loudly made and quickly broken. Vain janglings of false philosophy; the perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds. The startled cry of fear and causeless terror; the brag and bluster of impious bravado; the songs of empty mirth and joyless jollity, and all the jar and wrangle, the discord and distraction, the sighing and groaning that confuse the senses of the sinner while he lies in the deep, dark, deadly pit of unrepented, unforsaken, unforgiven sin.

And the clay, my brethren, what of that? Ah, sin is not merely restlessness, but pollution. It not only makes the sinner unhappy, but it degrades him. It defiles him foully, staining his spiritual garments through and through, so that there is only one way known of cleansing them. Miry clay; clay that leaves its mark wherever it touches; clay that is soft and deep; not clay on which you might build a house, but clay that will hardly hold a man; clay that clogs men; clay that holds men tight; clay into which they sink deeper and deeper; clay in which they sometimes die. But do they ever die in such a place? Why don't they try to get out? They do try, but they cannot do it. In all the long list of those who have been in this horrible pit, there is not one name opposite to which you could write—got out by himself. The sides cannot be climbed. They are more treacherous than the loosest shale that ever hung on mountain's brow, steeper than the icy slope of the Matterhorn. If it ever seems practicable, it is but seeming. The rock you grasp is loose, the root you seize is rotten, the crag that promised you good hold slips away within your fingers, the projecting shelf that looked firm as granite crumbles beneath your feet, and you sink down again with a cry upon your lips that sounds strangely like one that Paul often heard in his day, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death!" But the King doesn't tell us all about this horrible pit. Did you ever by the feeble light of torch or candle grope your way through the intricate passages of some cavern in the limestone hills? Do you remember how you stepped back startled by the deep black something that your feeble lights showed lying right before you, and how a steadier gaze showed you the thin crust of the cavern floor worn through just there, and water rolled hollowly beneath, and sent up a sound as from unfathomed depths? What if you had slipped through? Ah! you don't like to think of it, but there was the chasm nevertheless; and there is beneath this pit of noises another pit, deeper and darker still; and there are who slip through into it at last, and once there, there is no return. If this were horrible, that is more horrible still; for the noises there are gnashings of remorseful teeth, its miry clay is hot with undying fire, and the name of this deepest,

darkest, direst horror of the universe is—Hell. That pit you do not know. God forbid you should ever know it, but this other pit—do any of you know what that is? David says he knew it once only too well. He was in it, and in doleful plight. Is it possible that any of you are held in its miserable darkness to-day? But let the King go on with his story.

II.—"*I waited patiently for the Lord*," he says, "*and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.*" Then if David could not climb out of the pit himself, he could at any rate ask someone else to help him out. Yes, and he did ask, and made his petition in the right quarter, for he cried out to the Lord. Perhaps the Hebrew form of this expression may help us to see what he did. "In waiting I waited for the Lord." This was as far removed from that fatalistic waiting which is very like inaction, and which attempts to justify itself by saying that it cannot move till God moves it; that if it is to be saved, it will be, and so it will wait for the effectual call; as could be. There was the greatest earnestness about this waiting. He waited upon God in every way that was open to him. He sought Him with all his heart. He cried out to Him mightily. He roared in the bitterness of his spirit, and the patience of this waiting was shown in that humble spirit that left the how and when of his salvation entirely to God, which said—"Lord, here I am in the mire of this fearful place, helpless, undone. I perish if Thou should'st refuse Thy help. Lord, help me, anyway, in Thine own way, at Thy own time, in Thy own wisdom, but help me." It is just the same patience of waiting that breathes through the familiar lines

> "Could my tears for ever flow,
> Could my zeal no languor know,
> These for sin could not atone;
> Thou must save, and Thou alone:
> In my hand no price I bring,
> Simply to Thy cross I cling."

III.—"*And He inclined unto me, and heard my cry.*" What a story all this opens! It is a son, wayward and restless, who has left home long ago to get what the world can give him; lost indeed for many a year. At length tidings comes to the old house that the son is found—but where? They know that pit out in the waste there: they think he's there: for they have heard cries and moans, and it

sounds very like his voice. That's enough for the father. Away directly to the yawning chasm, hoping, fearing, trembling to find it true. How he bends over the brink to listen. Hush! a low murmur! Hush again! He inclines his ear still lower. There it is—"I have sinned against Heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." That sounds like his voice. Hark again —"I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sins are ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight." He knows it now; it is his son's voice, for "he has inclined his ear unto him, and heard his cry." So does the Great Father yonder, bend and listen to the feeble sighings of a contrite heart. But what next.

IV.—"*He brought me up also out of the horrible pit, out of the miry clay.*" Did ever love stay content with listening in such a case? Something must be done for him that prays down there. And something is done. Always hanging in the semi-darkness of this pit, if men could but see it, is a rope of marvellous construction. Its fibres are of truth, twisted into strands of comfortable doctrine, and the rope is knotted into promises here and there along it, so that it is good to climb and hold by. Swaying and swinging in the gloom, it is a rare thing to see, and yet few see it, or seeing, care to trust themselves to it. Yet there it hangs, long enough to reach down to the most degraded sinner, strong enough to hold a clinging world. Not good at climbing? I tell you the first grip of this gospel rope will put a new life into you. Try that first and lowest knot swinging near you now, "He that cometh unto God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." Grasp that firmly, and then for the next, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live." And then, "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." And then, "It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save

sinners." And then, "The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." And then, "Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by him all that believe are justified from all things from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." And then, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." And then, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." And so from knot to knot of Gospel promise. from step to step of faith, and hope, and knowledge, cheered in the holy struggle by the secret consolation of the Spirit, and upheld by hands that are all Divine, the penitent rises, and climbing ever higher, comes at last to Him that holds the promises, and with one great venture lays hold upon the Saviour. Leaving the rope, he clings to the Redeemer: letting go the letter of the promise, he leans upon the Living, Loving Lord!

And what then?

V.—*And set my feet upon a rock*, continues the King. How glorious a contrast to the wretchedness of the pit! Rock after mire, a firm foothold after perpetual slipping! Cannot you recall the feeling? Don't you remember how, after long plodding through the deep sand upon your own shore, you came at last upon a piece of rock the wind had blown bare, and stood at rest awhile, every muscle in your body glad for the relief? Or when on some shivery day in winter, you had trudged through the slippery snow for miles making weary way, and suddenly a piece of hard earth, or ancient pavement, why it was like sunshine after storm, like a strain of music breaking out of long and grating discords. Or you were through fresh ploughed fields on what the farmers call heavy clay land, after October showers. Do you remember the heavy pull through that worse than mire, and the sense of more than pleasure that came over you when, aching and sweating and bemired all over, you stood to take breath on the hard gravel at the other side? It is like that, but infinitely better, when after the miserable plunging and sinking of a Christless life, God sets the feet upon the broad Rock of the Atonement, and lifts up the light of His countenance upon head and

heart. I need hardly say the sinner whose feet are there is safe, or remind you that he that continues to rest there shall never perish, but have everlasting life. What further from this far-travelled Monarch?

VI.—*And established my goings.* This is an anticipation of what in later days he would take the form of, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." What were his goings before? Anything but established. Veering about to every point of the spiritual compass in succession. He ran hither and thither after pleasure that always mocked him. His feelings grew hot and cold in a breath almost. One day he would be a Christian, the next he wouldn't. Now he resolved to begin to pray, and then he thought he'd let it be. On the Sabbath touched with the beauty of holiness, on the week-day admiring the charms of gold. This week making up his mind to reform, the next thinking it was no use. Now full of good desires, then as cold as ice and hard as iron. Now vowing and promising to give his heart to God, then cursing all good men as hypocrites, and calling the whole thing a sham. Full of uncertainty: now praying, now careless; now desiring, now fearing; now thanking God for all the mercies of this life, and now wishing he had never been born. That was in the former days, but his goings are established now. He has a purpose and a plan in life. He knows what life was given for, and he is using it for the glory of God. "This one thing I do" is the fixed determination of his soul, and casting away every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset him, like some celestial racer who beholds the goal of glory, he runs with patience in the way to Heaven, looking unto Jesus

> "Humble, trustful, glad, secure,
> For God hath made his footsteps sure."

But that is not all;

VII.—"*And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God.*" That is, He hath made me gloriously happy. The unforgiven man knows how to sing at times, but he cannot sing the new song. It is a rare piece of melody, this. The old song was boisterous enough at times, especially when Folly led the measure, and Drunkenness roared out the chorus. The old singing came by fits and

starts: a good bargain would start it, a bad debt would stop it; a sunny morning would inspire it, a sloppy, sleety afternoon choke it altogether. A rise in wages, a successful speculation, an unexpected dividend, these would unseal the fountains of the old singing, and we should have such music; but how when work grew scarce, and creditors were pressing, and business dragged heavily? But the new song doesn't mind the weather or the markets. It can rise just as well in solitude as in a crowd. Money cannot buy it, and poverty cannot stop it. It can sound out as easily in the cottage of the peasant, as in the saloon of the prince: in the mine or in the workshop, as well as in the mansion or the drawing room. Rough voices can sing it, and unmusical ears can catch its rhythm and its roll. It is not too difficult for the broken voice of age, and not too hard for the lisping lips of childhood. It can rise up beneath the hissing of slander, and the laughing of contempt. The lordly presence of kings and governors cannot shame it into silence. Men have sung it beneath the bitter scourging of the Roman rods: they have looked on ruined house, and confiscated property, and helpless family, and sung it still. Marched down the streets of heathen city to be slain, they have sung it still. Fettered and gyved and bleeding, they have sung it still. Before the faggot or the axe, they have sung it still; and when the gag was in their mouth, and the fire flamed about them, and the drums beat furiously that none might hear them, how often

> "Joy through their swimming eyes did break,
> And mean the thanks they could not speak."

But only God can teach it. There are no books of rules to instruct you in it. It is set high enough for the holiest angels, and low enough for the feeblest men. It has all movements in it, from "the sacred awe that dares not more," to the rapturous Hallelujah that startles all the neighbourhood. Its range of subject is infinite. All tones are in it, from the sobbing gratitude that adores and wonders, to the ecstatic gladness that shouts aloud for joy. It is a sweet song, and a powerful song, and an inspiring song, and a divine song, but it is an unfinished song. No man ever heard it altogether as it should be; no man ever heard the whole of it down here. Sing it how we will, we only catch the first notes now, but if we sing on, we

shall be able to join in it when saints and angels sing the Hallelujah Chorus of the Universe before the throne of God.

And yet once more.

VIII.—*Many shall see it and fear, and shall trust in the Lord.*" Of how much service to the church is one sound conversion! Tracts, and books, and letters, and meetings, and addresses, and sermons, sinners somehow manage to evade and forget, but a life bright with the light and love of God is not so easily put by. A sermon may be powerful and pointed, but a sinner converted from the error of his way, truthful, gentle, unselfish, chaste, honest, and kind, where before he was deceitful, rough, selfish, impure, dishonest, and unkind, is an unanswerable argument. Would that we had more of such witnesses to the truth. No doubt the King's hope was fulfilled, and many did see, and fear, and trust in the Lord.

So ends King David's story. Is it not a striking one? Is it like a chapter out of your own life?

If any of us are still in the pit, can we be brought up?

Is this an exceptional experience, or what all may know?

How long need we continue in the pit?

Is it possible for us to enter into the whole of his experience?

May we look for any such deliverance soon?

Could we learn the new song to-day?

SERMON XVII.

DEATH A GAIN TO THE GODLY.

"*To die is gain.*"—Philippians i, 21.

YES, Paul says so about himself, but is it true about others? He had not many things to hold him to life as the world thinks. He had amassed no property; he had no settled home. No children frolicked about his footsteps, or climbed upon his knee; no lucrative business demanded his continual attention; no civic honours were wreathed about his brow. Perhaps to such a one dying might be a gain, but can it be so to everyone. Then he was fervid, sensitive and imaginative, and natures so delicately strung, specially if life has been stern, might court any change, even dying, and count it an advantage; but what of other natures, not sensitive, to which the world has given favours more than frowns? Can they ever get to think this statement true? Then he was such a one as Paul the Aged, and when the eye is dim and the natural force abated, it perhaps is not strange if the old man learns to look at death with something of a longing. To leave a world with which he has but little now in common, and which sometimes looks askance at him as if he were already a burden to it, may not seem very dreadful to him, nay, may possibly appear desirable, but can the young and vigorous feel this, believe this, that to die is gain? No, not all natures, not all men can or ought to believe this about themselves, for it is not true of all, but of some it is true. Do you know who these are, dear brethren? Do you know who they are who have the right to listen to this sweet Evangel? Do you know who can skill to

gather meat out of this eater, to suck honey out of this lion? Do you know who have the divine license thus to defy the King of Terrors? This is one of the mysteries of the Kingdom, made known to those only who are its loyal subjects. To them Christ's true disciples, it is the most sober as well as most magnificent of revelations. To such a life as theirs, of which Christ is the one all-controlling motive and Lord, it is the natural, inevitable, and all glorious sequence—"to die is gain."

I want to suggest to-day some of those particulars in which it is our privilege to believe it true. I suppose there cannot be much difficulty in believing this.

I.—*Concerning the body.*

The only ones who will be disposed to look twice at this will be the young, who have scarcely discovered yet that they have a body. But some of you will know that no very great change would be wanted in this respect to make it a gain to you. Merely to be rid of the body would to you be a vast advantage. What pain it has caused you! What a weight of lead it has hung about your spirit! How much time you have been obliged to use simply in attending to its interests! How it has hampered you in thinking, in working, in praying! Some of you have done little else than mend it ever since you had it, poor cranky machine! Mend how you will, it is evidently coming to pieces soon. Like some pilgrim's tent pitched on the desert plain, it shows sore signs of wear. There are great rents in the canvas, the tent pins are often breaking, ominously in the dreary night flaps the loosened covering, the cords that keep it in its place are thin, and frayed and rotten—it will soon come down. Well, let it come. We shall have a better one when we want it, "a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

And then we may think to die is gain as regards

II.—*The Intellect.* We don't know a great deal of the details of the happier state, but there are some things we may safely put down as banished from it. We shall never meet with an idiot there. Insanity will be unknown there. I do not expect to find all minds of equal calibre and strength by any means, but the feeblest will not be dull, the humblest understanding there will not be shallow. I

don't know whether we shall come at truth by intuition, but certainly we shall be delivered from the laborious processes by which we acquire it now. And when we get it, we shall get it not distorted, or hinted at, or in guesses, but so far as our capacity will allow, pure and certain and full. We shall still see Truth with our own mind and not with another's, but the medium of perception will be perfect. Some will have a much finer mind than others, just as one telescope may be larger and better than another where both are good, but there will be no broken lenses, no crack in the object glass, no deficiency in the eye piece, no twist in the tube, and to speak in the language of the optician, the focussing will be precise, the spherical aberration perfectly corrected, and the achromatism absolute.

Then as to

III.—*Language*, and the means of conveying thought to one another. It is often a clumsy expedient now, never a perfect one. You sometimes need a dozen words to tell a thought in, and even then only half do it, and to communicate with your friend at a distance you either write, or send a messenger, or telegraph, and even then he doesn't always know exactly what you intend, for the mind often has shades of meaning, that words are not able accurately to convey. I don't know at all in what manner the immortals converse with one another, but I can see many things in our present mode of communication in regard to which it is not hard to believe that to die is gain.

IV.—Then take the *country* where the good man dwells. I don't know what the Switzers might say to this, for theirs is a grand land, or the Italians, or the inhabitants of Jamaica, or Ceylon, or indeed the men of our own shores, for there are rare landscapes within the bounds of this streak of silver sea. There are spots which look at times as if they might vie with Eden, and carry off the palm. But there are other places where this would not be at all difficult to believe. Interminable plains of sand and pebbles, growing nothing, feeding nothing, yielding nothing, except heat and desolation: volcanic wastes such as in Iceland: vile marshes as on the west coast of Africa, fetid, feverous, fatal: icebound shores as those of Green-

land and Spitzbergen: but I needn't particularize further. The finest country is not perfect here, but that is a fair land we are going to. Mayhap we shall miss the sunsets there, for they tell me that there the Sun goes no more down, neither does the moon withdraw itself, but we shall gain what as yet we have no conception of. There will be as great a difference between this and that, as between your neighbourhood * when the rain comes down dree and steadily through a November afternoon, and all the air is foul with smoke and sulphur, and everything drips, drips, drips monotonously, and when on some June morning the south wind blows softly, and fringy cloudlets dot the azure sky, and the sweet scent of flowers breathes in the balmy air, and the sea lies like an infant smiling as he sleeps.

Ay, and more than that, far more. Take again

V.—*The Home he lives in here.* Will not death be gain? You would think so, if you saw the wretched habitations in which in this very town some of God's children live. You ought still to think so, if you saw them in the finest palace that the skill of man has ever reared. A better house yonder? Of course. The Builder's better! Who builds down here? At the best a bungler, a clumsy contriver with coarse materials, but he that builds up there is God. The finest architecture of earth will be, by the side of the many mansions, like the mud huts of Killarney by the side of Chatsworth, like a gipsy's tent by the side of the towers of Windsor, or like the sod-covered, pebble-built hovel of a Highland shepherd by the magnificent cathedrals of Lincoln or of York. What He can do, you see a little of now. Look at the bloom upon the peach, the down on the butterfly's wing, the green velvet of the mosses, the rugged majesty of the oak, the strange crystallizing in the snow flakes, the solemn grandeur of the mountains, the blazing cressets of the stars. Look at these, and think what that house will be whose builder and maker is God.

Then think of

VI.—*The work he is doing.* Here affrighted nature is inclined to say, in sight of the coffin and the grave—"it is all over; his work is done: his purposes are broken off.

* Composed at Sunderland.

his tale is told." And here too Faith, amid the sorrows of bereavement, beholding the unfinished plans, the suddenly stopped machinery, the place that must now be for ever vacant, the post of honourable labour that no one else can fill, and remembering how heartily he had entered into it, how fully he had mastered its difficulties, and how steadily he was proceeding to its fulfilment and victory, sometimes only dimly sees the higher bliss of the departed one, and is disposed to say that his death was but a doubtful gain. Ay, to us the living, may be, but not to him the dead. The dead, do I say; no, the doubly living. To him the departure is indeed a gain. Do you say his work is done? Nay, verily, only just begun. He has tools now to work with. Down here he had but the rudiments and patterns of them. He has a plan now to go by. Down here he often worked at random, and struck in the dark. He has noble purposes to execute: here he had glimpses of something better before him, but often when the spirit was willing, the flesh was weak. Down here he was like the child putting its syllables painfully together, and prattling meanwhile; but there he is like the man who moves a multitude with burning words. Down here he was like the student, tracking the road to learning with dull steps and slow; but there he is like the Master, standing on the crowning steep of Knowledge, and viewing with raptured vision all the landscape o'er. Down here he was like the labourer who squares the stone, or breaks the clod, or tends the cattle clumsily and heavily from day to day, but up there he is like a lord of large experience who, with subtle brain and lissome fingers, has learnt to charm the canvas into beauty, or smite the marble into life!

VII.—Then *as to his usefulness*, death is gain. What—here, and to us who lose him? Perhaps so. There have been men who in life were only feeble witnesses for Christ, but who in death gave wondrous testimony. Samson like, the manner of their departure was of more effect for good than the whole time of their remaining, and being dead, they still and strongly speak to us. But if not, their power of usefulness where it can be exercised can suffer no detriment by death. I know not what ministries of blessing shall be assigned to the departed, or in what regions of

their King's dominions they shall be called to labour, but I can well believe that when love is entirely without dissimulation, and judgment purged from foolishness, and action uncramped by feebleness, and intention untarnished by sin and unfettered by fear, that in any sphere in which they shall be called to move, death as regards their power of usefulness will have been a manifest and endless gain.

Then take the question of

VIII.—*Enjoyments.* Treading quietly about the sick chamber lest the jar and noise should vex the sufferer, watching the struggle with disease, and seeing how completely the pleasant sounds and sights of earth are shut out from him who lies there faint and fevered, and then gazing on the countenance settled at last into the awful stillness never more to be broken here, hearing nothing, too, but the sob and sigh of the survivors, or the monotonous tick, tick of the old clock that seems to say "Ever; for ever—Ever; for ever," as it never did before, it seems sometimes difficult to believe this scripture true. For there lies what we were used to call our friend, and moves not, speaks not, and there comes no sound upon the air as of angels' welcome, no faintest strain as if harp strings had been struck far, far away, no chime as of silver bells rung in the celestial city because another pilgrim hath reached the gates. Faith sometimes hears all that, but to mortal ears there is nothing but the subdued whisper of those who watch and wait below, and the melancholy plash of the raindrops on the casement. But is he happy then? He hardly knew what happiness was till now. Before he was like the traveller in Arabian deserts who scoops a little water from the sand, and drinks it carefully and slowly; now he stands by an opened fountain, springing, sparkling, gushing, and is satisfied. Is he happy? Before he was like a beggar, eating the shreds and crumbs of the rich man's table; now he is like a prince seated at a royal banquet. Happy? Why he was like a man who feeds on the scantiest and coarsest food; now he is as one to whom they bring the grapes of Eshcol, and the wines of Lebanon, and the garnered grain of Gilead, and fountains plash beside him odorous with Carmel spices, and ever and anon sweet singers strike the harps of God. Happy? Why he was like the wayfarer trudging through the dirt

and darkness towards his home, and catching sight sometimes of the household fires playing red upon the windows; but now he has crossed the threshold, he is clothed in white apparel, kind hands are pressing his in welcome, gentle voices greet him, the Father's smile is on him, the Father's grace hath crowned him, and he who was once a wanderer is safe and sound at home.

Then to die is gain to the christian as regards

IX.—*Friendship.* What? Gain to die, when tenderest glances from those who stand about him awake no bright response there; when the loudest and most agonizing cry evokes no answer? Is it gain to the little child to leave the folding arms of its mother? Is it gain to the father to pass out alone where voice of child, or wife can no longer reach him? Does there lurk some secret blessing behind the last farewell? Is he not going into

> "A land of deepest shade,
> Unpierced by human thought,
> The dreary regions of the dead,
> Where all things are forgot?"

Not at all! That's mere poetic license—not truth. The regions of some of the dead are dreary enough, not with forgetfulness, but remembrance; but he is not going there. He is going where everybody he meets will be his friend, trusty and well beloved. He talks here of some who are his associates; there they are all brothers. Here he has acquaintances; there he will have friends. What if they have never seen him before? Do you think they will stand upon the senseless ceremonies we do here on earth, and refuse to notice him because they have never been introduced? Do you think they will be stiff and cold to him, because they had a large estate on earth, and he had only weekly wages; because they died worth half a million of money, and he not worth half a sovereign? Why those to them will be like the babyish traditions of the nursery, long cast off and heartily repented of; and wheresoever through those golden streets he walks, he will not meet with one whose brow will lower at his coming, whose hand will touch his coldly, or whose voice will sound a doubtful welcome to him there. Did I say he goes where no one knows him? Is it so? Will the companions of his youth have forgotten their comrade when he comes? Won't the

mother know her child that day? Will the little one the Saviour took awhile ago look with unconcern upon those eyes that filled with bitter tears, as they watched him sink into that last long sleep? Wouldn't Jonathan know David when he came? Wouldn't Paul know Timothy when the angels led him through the gates? People sometimes ask "Shall we know each other there?" How could death be gain if we did not? Wouldn't Latimer and Ridley know each other when they met in heaven, after burning at the stake on Oxford Green? Would Charles Wesley need to be told who it was, when his brother John went in triumph into the presence of his Lord? Of course we shall know each other there, far better than we can here to-day, and in that friendship there shall be no reserve, no misgiving, no flaw. To say who will be the friends of the good man then is simply to name the best and worthiest of the world, and to compare our state to-day with our state then, is to say that now we are like poor men, who walk in tattered garments through a waste wilderness with one or two besides, but then we shall be like princes, standing in our Father's Palace, hailed as brother by the true nobility of all the ages, counted Friend by all, from the Keeper of the gates up to the highest courtier who waits in the Presence chamber, and bows before the Throne!

Then take

X.—*Experience.* If I name this last, it is not because it is least. You say it is good to-day, but it will be better then. Is it peace now? Then it shall be unbroken calm. Is it joy to-day? Then it shall be rapture. Is it the excitement of struggle now? Then it shall be the bliss of perfect victory. Is it the following after Christ now? Then it shall be being with Christ which is far better. Better to die? Yes! just as perfect holiness is better than partial holiness. Just as the mirror absolutely clear is better than the mirror dull and dim. Just as perfect vision is better than seeing through a glass darkly. Just as manhood is better than youth, or the day better than the dawning, or the harvest better than the spring time, or the finished picture better than the outline, or speech better than stammering, or safety better than danger, or to anchor in the harbour better than tossing in the roadstead or grounding on the bar.

LECTURE.

LECTURE.

ST. PAUL.

Very many years ago, God lighted a candle in the neighbourhood of Palestine, and set it on a candlestick. It was seen from far and near. The watchers in Zion saw it, and the dwellers in Samaria. It was seen from Tyre and Sidon, and from sea-born Salamis. Regal Antioch beheld it, and philosophic Athens, and effeminate Corinth. It shone upon the scholars of Tarsus, and the traders of Ephesus. The hills of Phrygia saw it, and it glittered on the rivers of Damascus. It shone amidst the wilds of Macedonia, and the green pastures of Italy, in the market place at Philippi, and in the prison at Rome. And there are who tell us that the swarthy Spaniard saw it, and that it even startled the benighted worshippers of Woden and of Thor. After a while God removed it to a better Canaan than this, and set it somewhere in His great Temple, but it left a lingering radiance behind it that has touched and glanced on every generation since, and though the light of our times is yet dim, and the perfect day a vision that tarrieth, we had set in denser darkness, and with far feebler expectation, but for the setting in the candlestick of the Apostolic office of that last and brightest of all the lights that graced it,

THE APOSTLE PAUL.

It is of him I wish to speak to-night, but I am met at once by a difficulty. I cannot comprehend him; and they tell me that whoso would judge of statuary should himself be a sculptor; that Mozart or Handel will tell you best of

the merit of a chorus; and that no mind narrower than Shakespeare's can really grasp the author of King Lear or Othello. But if the picture must be greatly wanting, as it will be, will you let me sketch an outline for you? If in the playing of this piece some of the chords must be imperfect, will you allow a rough musician to strike a note or two that may give you some idea of the original? Or if he cannot carry all the grapes of this Apostolic Eshcol, will you let one who has passed that way offer you a single cluster? Or if the fruitage of this field be too vast for my hand to garner, will you let me show you an ear or two that I have gleaned?

Perhaps it may not be out of place if here, just at the beginning of our talk concerning him, we ask about his beginning, the where and when. I don't know that birthplace determines destiny very certainly, except it may be in the slums and garrets of London. Many that begin life in those courts will probably die in them, and the existence that commences in the alley will close in the gutter; but we are curious, nevertheless, as to the place where the eyes first open to the light. In this case we have little difficulty in finding it. Between the mountain ranges of Taurus and Amanus, and down to the sea, there lies a tract of country which in the time of the Roman Emperors was called Cilicia; the western part rough and mountainous, but the eastern chiefly "a rich and extensive plain." Near to the western edge of this plain, and a few miles from the sea, there lay on the banks of the Cydnus the city of Tarsus, the capital of the province, and a free city of the empire. Ancient historians fully justify its scriptural designation, "no mean city." Learning appears to have been in high repute there, for Strabo tells us that, in all that relates to philosophy and general education, it was even more illustrious than Alexandria or Athens. Somewhere within its walls, there was born to a family of the tribe of Benjamin that son of whom we speak to-day.

We have greater difficulty in determining the exact time of his birth. There is no authentic information concerning this, but we know that when Stephen was martyred, he was called a young man, so we may have pretty firm foothold for it, if we place his birth about A.D. 2 or 3. "He must have been born in the later years of

Herod, or the earlier of his son Archelaus." The motley group of provinces that made up the Roman Empire lay at rest. The civilized world was at peace, and the sceptre of Augustus was swayed in undisturbed triumph. Horace and his patron, Mæcenas, had recently died. It was a little before Caligula was born, a little after Livy's history ends, and just about the time when He, who had spoken to the fathers by the prophets, was preparing to speak to the world by His Son.

Of St. Paul's family connexions we have not much knowledge. His mother is never mentioned in any of his writings, and of his father we only know that he was a Pharisee, and a citizen of Rome. We hear once of his sister's son, and once of some kinsmen then living at the metropolis, and here our information stops. But we have no misgiving as to what kind of a family it was into which he was born. Though belonging to the Jews of the Dispersion, his father was never so far from his own country as to forget his Judaism. A Pharisee and a strict one he was in that Cilician city, and though he benefited by the favour of Augustus, he never forgot his higher obligations to Moses. A Hebrew of the Hebrews, his son was able to call himself afterwards, and we know that he was brought up "after the most straitest sect" of that religion. Hence it is not difficult to imagine under what religious influences his early life was passed, and what stories those would be with which his childish curiosity was appeased. They could not fail to tell him of the peace of Eden, the subtilty of the serpent, and the sword that flamed every way; how Cain killed Abel, and Noah built the ark, and his descendants tried to build Babel. He would hear of the great Covenant. thrice repeated; of Abraham's faith, of Isaac's well-digging, and Jacob's wrestling; of the death by the road to Ephrath, and Benoni's birth; of Joseph in Egypt, and how Benjamin was honoured there; how his royal namesake was chosen from the little tribe; how when the tribes revolted Benjamin remained faithful; and how in after years the Benjamite Mordecai was the means of saving the nation from the hand of Haman. All this, and more, he would learn out of that marvellous book to which the world still listens.

I hope they were gentle to the boy, for I fear me greatly

that straitest sects of that or any religion are not good for children. The childish mind doesn't take easily to prayers that must be measured out by the yard, and rites and ceremonies that must be attended to every two hours. There is a buoyancy about it that is hard to press down to the dead level of sectarian properness, a happy freedom that rebels against the harsh religionism that discovers beauty in strictness, power in peculiarities, and can see no goodness in any but those who speak its Shibboleth, and travel in its own wretched rut. Mark you, when sectarianism means dissent from sin, and the straitness thereof a separation from iniquity, I have nothing to say but God speed such splits and breaches, but when it means selfishness, and scrupulousness, and narrowness, and contempt of others, when its favourite work is to tithe mint and anise and cummin, and its most distinguished achievement to strain out a gnat, and swallow a camel, I cannot help but hope that some day either gnat or camel will succeed in choking it.

The Jews were strict as to the teaching of their children, so the little Saul would presently be sent to school, but whether that was entirely Jewish or Greek, and what were the incidents of his stay there, we can only conjecture. Boyhood will be pretty much the same all the world over, and perhaps the birch was an institution at Tarsus, as at Eton or Rugby; so if Saul was idle, he would probably be thrashed for it, and as probably blubber in consequence: if anyone hit him, he would hit back, and if they couldn't settle which was stronger, cleverer, richer, taller, handsomer,—it doesn't matter what, for boys will fight about anything, from a hard chesnut to moral philosophy they would probably adjourn the meeting to the banks of the Cydnus, and have it out there in the most approved style, ancient and modern. Was he dull or clever at this Cilician school? Great men are not always great when in short petticoats. Some genuises were thought dullards when they learnt to read, and some were always great. How with Saul? We don't know. "All's well that ends well," says the poet, and this ended well, so we'll be content to say so, and skip his school days, at least in Tarsus; yet not without mentioning what in all probability occurred before he left there for a larger place:—he was taught a

trade. That was a Jewish custom, too, to let every boy have the opportunity of learning some trade. I need not say it was a good one. It were well, if it were English also. It would tend to save men from the curse of well-bred idleness, and it might not be ill, if, taking gentle hold on the weaker members of the family, it saved women too. How much of shame and suffering might have been avoided, if children had been early taught the dignity of honest labour, and that the true dishonour of manhood was, not want of gold, but want of godliness! Want of means is with many worse than want of morality, and to be a tradesman more shameful than to be a thief. Some would rather take to swindling than to shopkeeping, and would sooner hear it said of them that they had been in the Divorce Court, than behind the counter. Verily great is the Diana of these Ephesians! Before her shrine thousands of perfumed exquisites bow. Young men who know the correct thing in trousers, and the right angle for the eyeglass, the likeliest winner of the Derby, and the airiest dancer on the boards. Young women who know the last thing out in tartans, can work at such a pattern, are great at the piano, graceful with the fan, industrious at shopping, and intelligent upon the last new novel, laborious with the croquet hammer, and elegant on the Promenade, but so far as the true work of life is concerned, about as ignorant and useless as the poodle that one of them pets, and the cigar that the other smokes. Verily, in some cases, one might the rather choose the poodle, for he could possibly be taught to guard the house at night, and thus do some service, and the best Havannah might be used to keep away the grubs, but what are many of their owners good for, except to be advertisements for the tailors, to part their hair in the middle, and to twiddle their thumbs! Well, if that be the great end of man, I'll have no end! If this be the summum bonum of social life, I'll be content with the malum! I'd rather stir the tan pits, or scrape sheepskins, or shoe horses, or scrub floors, than be so genteelly useless! There's tenfold more honour about the grimy face and smutty clothes of some village blacksmith, who knows his work and does it, than in the soft white hands and gorgeous apparel of titled indolence; tenfold more honour about the wrinkled skin

and coarse garments of the poor woman, who stands all day to wash, than in the begloved and bejewelled hands of the fine ladyism, whose greatest grief is that it has nothing to wear: tenfold more happiness beside; and if in that glorious company where gold is not riches, and broad acres are no inheritance, and ducal coronets are no longer crowns, some of these find their place the lowest, it will be but the woeful harvest that comes of a wicked seedtime, for if a man be too great to labour, he will not unusually be too proud to pray!

We are not able to say precisely how long it was before Saul left his father's house for his first great journey. In his speech before Agrippa, he intimates that it was at an early age that he left Tarsus for Jerusalem. Conybeare and Howson set it down for between ten and thirteen. However that may be, it was a great step in the life of the young Jew, and was to lay the foundation of the eminence to which, in general, as well as Jewish literature, he afterwards attained, for he sat at the feet of Gamaliel, one of the greatest doctors of the Jewish law in that or any age. Belonging to the famous Rabbinical school of Hillel, Gamaliel was its most honoured teacher. "His learning was so eminent, and his character so revered, that he is one of the seven who alone among Jewish Doctors have been honoured with the title of Rabban, and it is a saying of the Talmud that since Rabban Gamaliel died, the glory of the Law has ceased." This was the Gamaliel who stood up in the Sanhedrim when Peter told them all that, as for himself and his brother apostles, they were resolved to put God's authority first, and the Council's second. While they were meditating their death, this great Rabban stood up, and recommended them to let these men alone. If this work were only human, he had the sense to see it couldn't last, while if it were after all of God, it was useless as well as impious to resist it. Candour and honesty at least were his, but though they may have led him to examine these things for himself, he doesn't seem ever to have yielded to their force. He lived and died a Jew. I have rather lingered upon Gamaliel's character because of its influence upon his new pupil from Cilicia. A strong and generous mind like this could not but favourably influence others, and if, through ignorance of Jesus, he

failed to impart to his pupils that knowledge in which is true life, yet the mental drill through which he passed them, if through God's grace they found the Messiah through another medium, must have tended not a little to make their consequent discipleship as intelligent and useful, as it would be zealous and strong.

Nor are we able to say distinctly how many years he sat at the feet of Gamaliel. Whether they were few or many, we are sure, they were not idly spent; and we can fancy how the earnest student, gradually mastering the subtleties of Rabbinical teaching, became an apt logician, a skilful debater, but beyond all, grew to be more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of his fathers, so as to be regarded as the hope of his people, and the champion of those ecclesiastical privileges to which, now that their national glory had so grievously departed, they fondly clung. But we know that while those years were passing, there were things occurring in his near neighbourhood, in which he was afterwards to have the deepest interest. While he was listening to the sage utterances of the great Rabbi, there was growing up in the hill country of Judea, one who should presently speak such fiery words by Jordan, as would shake all Israel from Dan to Beersheba. While he was painfully diving into the mysteries of Moses, some rough lads were donning the fisher's coat, and learning fisher habits by the Lake of Galilee, who should after a while study the holier science of catching men; and while the punctilious Jew was busied with the innumerable rites and ceremonies, with which a mischievous tradition had overlaid the original enactments of Moses, there walked in the fields of humble Nazareth the Bringer in of a better righteousness, and the Founder of a more glorious economy; the Christ, for whose blessed name, he and myriads more would count every natural or acquired advantage, whether of birth, ancestry, person, property, or reputation, but dung and dross!

These years of his student life, as those of his earlier schooling, came at last to an end, and we may think of him as returning to his home on the banks of the Cydnus an accomplished scholar in the Law, and already taken notice of by the authorities and elders of the people. Meanwhile, the Voice cried in the Wilderness, and the

Pharisees and Scribes learnt their true character and name from the rough but honest Baptist. He for whom it cried appeared as the Messiah, and walked through the cities and villages preaching the glad tidings of the Kingdom. For three years the land was filled with miracle, while Incarnate Mercy trod it, and for three hours with darkness, when Incarnate Deity died. Meanwhile took place the Resurrection, and the ascent from Olivet; the day of Pentecost, and the tongues of fire; but not until the first enlistment is to be made into the noble army of Martyrs; do we hear anything more of him who had learnt, after the most straitest sect of his religion, to live a Pharisee. What we hear then has so important a bearing on his whole after history, that we shall be justified in trying even at length to scrutinize it, and, if possible, understand.

In spite of the rich effusion of holy power which blessed the church at Pentecost, worldly men would still have called the majority of its members poor. Many were poor to begin with, and made the poorer by their joining the church, but in those days, he who gave up houses or lands for Christ's sake, found them again in the generous liberality of his brethren, and for a time they had all things common. The distribution of this general fund was at first in the hands of the natural leaders of the Church, but becoming too heavy a tax upon their time and energy, the Apostles desired the brethren to choose some seven honest men, upon whose shoulders these secularities of the church might the better fall. So seven—there was happily no need to search with candles then—were inducted into that office, and the Twelve betook themselves to their higher ministry. The chief of these christian almoners was Stephen, whose highest praise was, that he was full of faith, and of the Holy Ghost. He was, moreover, no mean divine, and a speaker of more than common excellence. This latter qualification brought him into collision with a number of foreign Jews, upon the subject of the new Faith. Vehement and keen they were, but Stephen could hold his own against them all. The spirit and wisdom of the upper room were too much for the subtlety and skill of the synagogue. This roused their baser passions, and they fell back upon the good old plan of balancing force of

logic by force of fists, or

> "Proving their doctrine orthodox,
> By Apostolic blows and knocks."

So they raked up some scandalous fellows belonging to the breed that will swear to anything for a pot of beer, and dragged Stephen off to the Sanhedrim along with them, and charged him with blasphemy. I think I see them crowding into the Council Chamber, one upon another, in hot haste to get a verdict. There sit the venerable Seventy in a semicircle, with the President in the midst, and here stands the christian deacon, where a few months ago, there stood before the same Judges, his greater Master. There sits the lordly Annas, and near him his kinsman Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander. Is that Gamaliel, broad-browed and calm? But where sit the Arimathæn, and the timid Nicodemus? Are their seats vacant in these troublous times?

But what makes Annas gaze so earnestly upon his prisoner? Why do the aged judges start and look, and some of them tremble. What makes such a deadly whiteness come over the face of that false witness near him, and why does the rough hand that held him suddenly drop as if smitten with a palsy? Whom have they brought, did they say? A blasphemer? A common reprobate? A traitor and a heretic? Nay verily: traitors' pulses never beat so quietly as Stephen's: those are not blasphemers' eyes, and look upon the face—it is the face of an angel! Now begins the trial, and the disciple is put on his defence. His Master gloriously helps him. He begins calmly with the well known story of the call from Chaldea, and passes in swift review the great events of their national history, but suddenly breaks off to deliver a rebuke full of holy passion, and virtuous indignation at their sin. Now look around. That last stroke has roused them. See how the tiger champs his jaws. Look how they gnash their teeth against him. But stay: they talked of blasphemy, and Stephen has one more word to say. Will they hear it? His face is upward turned, the hands are clasped and lifted to the skies. What sees the Christian that he gazes so earnestly above him? Do the spirits of the just address him? More! Does he catch the distant flashing of the chariot of fire? More! Does he view the march of

watching angels? More than that! "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God!" That was enough; it was the rankest heresy! the most unblushing blasphemy! What? Jesus, the deceiver of the people, the teacher of sedition, the enemy of the nation, the friend of Beelzebub, the crucified malefactor, on the right hand of God? Oh! it was past bearing, and, with a loud cry of mingled rage and horror, they rushed upon him as he stood there, and hustled, and pushed, and dragged him out of the hall, and then, in a wild rout of frenzy, rushed down one of the narrow streets to the Damascus gate, and once outside, speedily formed a ring round the poor hunted christian, who has now but a few minutes to live. The ghastly preparations are soon made. The hired wretches, who are to cast the first stones, speedily divest themselves of their outer garments;—there is a hurry and a press amongst the crowd; a buzz, and then a dead stillness: and then, a loud voice invoking mercy on his murderers: and then, a sudden whirl of strong arms in the air; and then, a band of shining ones lead through the streets of the New Jerusalem, the first in the *Noble Army of Martyrs!*

But who is this that gives these Jewish rowdies their clothes again, when they have completed the slaughter; that looked with more than ordinary earnestness upon the lustrous countenance of the man they have just hounded to the death: that bears in his face the aspect of a strict Pharisee, and in his accent betrays the polish of the schools; rather insignificant than not to look at, but with something about him that makes you look again and again, as if the unpretending body shrined a noble soul? It is the Jewish lad that came here from the Cilician Athens, years ago, to hear Gamaliel lecture, and to learn the law; quick and zealous then, and quick and zealous now, but grown a man. The High Priest knows him, and indeed he is generally known and looked up to, as a strong and ready defender of their ancient faith. There is that about him that makes you think he will make his mark in the world, before he leaves it. He will have another name after a while, but at present they call him after the ill-fated prince that perished on Gilboa—simply Saul, Saul of Tarsus. It is not improbable that he was one of the

foremost opponents of Stephen, while they were disputing in the synagogue: it is certain he watched him die, and though we would fain hope that he did it with a pang, we cannot forget the significant intimation of Scripture, "and Saul was consenting unto his death."

Now began to be fulfilled the middle term of the Saviour's promise to his church. The gladness of its beginning had been experienced, and now came the unpleasing addition; "with persecutions." Having tasted blood, these Jewish wolves were eager to taste it again, and flung themselves with savage violence upon the flock of Christ. A great persecution arose against the church at Jerusalem, and its members were scattered abroad throughout Judæa and Samaria. In this the most prominent part appears to have been taken by Saul, who plainly showed that he was no believer in the principles of toleration. His logic was simple, if stern. All vermin ought to be destroyed; but these christians are vermin; therefore these christians ought to be destroyed. Nor did he hold this creed, without acting upon it. In the words of St. Luke, "he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women, committed them to prison." He was studying hard for a degree in the College of Cruelty, and presently gained it, for if anyone wanted afterwards, or wants to-day, a model of Inquisitorial harshness, he points to Saul the Persecutor. He richly deserved the name. Imprisonment, Scourging, Death—the horrible alphabet of persecution—were at his fingers' ends, and many an iniquitous sentence he worked out with them. The wretch, he went hither and thither like a fury, and, not content with laying hands on the men, seized women too. We all know they are not inapt at talking, but the temper of modern warfare is to let them pretty much alone. But it wasn't Saul's temper. Some cynics tell us that you may as well let them talk on, it will make little difference; but Saul didn't think so. And some brutes of men insinuate, that even if a woman was infected with heresy, just threaten to sit on her best bonnet, and it would soon bring her back to orthodoxy; but Saul didn't believe it would. He'd beat them well. Sticks and stones were his specifics for heterodoxy, and it is only fair to say that he applied them with a rare persistency. It is satis-

factory to learn that in after life he looked back upon this portion of his career with especial shame, and evidently couldn't forget that his bigoted zeal had so far unmanned him, as to make him commit women unto prison. Pleasantry apart, there can be no question that this Cilician Pharisee was about one of the most unamiable characters in Jerusalem. Self conceited, headstrong, bitter, bigoted, every day hatching new plots of persecution, blind to the calm dignity of christian men, unmoved by the tears of christian women, and the pitiful moaning of the orphaned little ones, Saul of Tarsus went about his wretched errand more like a devil than a man, and to have said that he would ever fill the holy office of a christian Apostle, would have seemed to any of the brethren like saying, that a lion from Lebanon would presently gambol with the lambs of Gilead, or that the cloudless sky of their Judæan summer was about to drop with snow.

But such an apparent impossibility was about to become a fact. The champion of Judaism was anxious to extend the area of his labours. The field of battle in Jerusalem had become too straitened for his chivalrous spirit: he wanted a broader basis of operations. The goats of Christianity had fled from the holy city, but this valorous keeper of the ancient fold would seek them out in their distant hiding places: so he applied to the High Priest for a commission to Damascus, that if he found any of that way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. This the High Priest very readily assented to, and supplied him with every requisite for making his journey a success. Saul would lose no time after his letters of introduction were sealed. The hateful heresy of the Galilean was to him a foul disease that had broken out within the fair domains of ancient Israel, and it must be sought out, found out, driven out, stamped out, cursed out; anything so that it be crushed, and every day that he lingered would fret him with the thought of its existence. So he set out in hot haste to ply his function as Inquisitor General in the oldest city in the world.

Curiosity would fain know something of the companions of his journey, and of the road they took; whether that by

which the caravans from Egypt usually travelled, which was joined by a road from Jerusalem at the entrance of Galilee, or one of the Roman roads, which were in the course of construction at that period throughout the empire, and which would turn off for Damascus somewhat more to the south than the other did. Concerning this, and the exact time of the year, we can only conjecture. But we know they journeyed, and had come nigh the city. On their left rose the heights of Antilibanus, and, conspicuous, amongst them, the snowy Hermon: on their right stretched away for many a league the sands of the Syrian desert: behind them the high grounds, bare and sterile, over which rises and falls the road from Judæa; and before them, in the midst of gardens and shrubberies and watercourses, gleamed the white buildings of beautiful Damascus. Perhaps they halted—most travellers do—as from some elevation in the road they caught the first sight of this Queen of the Desert. Some might think of Eliezer and Gehazi; of the little maid and lordly Naaman, and travel-soiled and hot with their midday march, sigh for a plunge beneath the waters of Abana and Pharpar; but one there was amongst them whose thoughts are still more easily imagined. There was the object of his toil, would think their impetuous leader, and amongst those trees and flowers grew the rank weeds of a hateful heresy, the poisonous fruit of a pestilent superstition. His was the work of cleansing it away, and his should be the praise of having restored to its primitive loveliness the much disfigured garden of the Lord. He was impatient to begin. While they lingered there, precious time was wasted. Let them on; he has God's battles to fight, they shall rest presently, but let them do their duty first. It may be beautiful, and all that, but there's heresy hiding and skulking within those walls, and he must seek it out: there are obstinate sinners against God and His law defiling this earthly Paradise, and he has a message for them which he burns to deliver: let them on! So they went on, and drew nigh to Damascus. The sun was high in the heavens—it was midday—and all Nature was still in the hush of noon, when suddenly there shone round about them a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun. In a moment they were all fallen to the earth. Trembling with terror,

they all heard a voice, but to one of them only was it intelligible. He not only heard a voice, but saw the One who uttered it—the rest saw nothing but the light—and heard Him say, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Hardly daring to look at the glorious Being who addressed him, he faltered out, "Who art thou, Lord?" And then came the astounding reply, "I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest." Trembling and astonished, the prostrate persecutor said, "What shall I do, Lord?" And once more came there a voice from this excellent glory, "Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." The awful dialogue ended, the vision passed away. One by one the companions of his travel ventured to stand upon their feet: Saul rose too. They looked around them; everything was as usual. Overhead burnt and blazed the Syrian sun; short fell the shadows on the dusty road; there was the city in her gardens, and the sheen of her flowing waters, but Saul opened his eyes in vain. His sight was gone, and some of them took him by the hand, and led him into Damascus.

What became of his companions those two or three days that followed, we cannot tell, but we can imagine how soon the wonderful light that they had seen had been heard of by all the Jews resident in the city, and what regrets were expressed that the righteous zeal of their leader had received so complete a check. Of himself, two or three words contain all our information, but they are full of meaning; "he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink." Any great shock to the mind can make fasting a necessity for a time, but this was a shock that came near causing him never to eat again. Its force we can only feebly estimate. The surprise, the conflict, the stun to the mind, are beyond us. What he thought, and felt, and said, during those memorable days, are only known to God, but we may be sure that, if ever spirit was in an agony of shame and sorrow, it was his; if ever fearfulness and trembling caught hold on a man, it was now; if ever conscience lashed, and memory stung, if ever sin was exceeding sinful, and the law exceeding holy, and the fires of Gehenna exceeding dreadful, it was to him. He had been a proud Pharisee, a vain meritmonger; set stiffly against conviction, deaf to the voice of

prophecy, and the unparallelled events of the past few years, dark, and haughty, and stern, and cold: he had harried the sheep of the Lord, sold them into the hands of the slaughterer, and desolated their quiet folds. Wretched sinner that he was, he had thought he was doing God service, while he was serving Satan. Raging hither and thither like a roaring lion, he sought in his madness whom he might devour; for God's sake, he said. Vain delusion: it was for sin's sake, and the devil's sake! And worse than all, he has been smiting Jesus, mocking and insulting the holy Jesus, blaspheming the glorified Jesus! Whither shall he turn? His fondest dreams are broken, his most cherished convictions are a lie, his fairest memories are a blot and stain, his chiefest exploits are a foul dishonour, his lordliest castles are built upon the sand! "Why persecutest thou me?" Oh, that glorious face! Then this way was not heresy, and Stephen was not beside himself, and the Apostles were not madmen. Then John was really a prophet, and these christians are not fools, and this Jesus was not a deceiver of the people, a sower of sedition, in league with Beelzebub, gluttonous and a winebibber, an enemy of the nation, and blasphemer against God! So surged and rolled through three weary days the tide of thought in the mind of Saul. Blinded to all outward things, the eye of his soul was fixed on eternal realities. With no choice whatever as to his conviction of the truth as it is in Jesus, and his consequent sin, the great question of obedience or disobedience is now left to his calm and deliberate volition. He sees the way, was forced to see it, but will not be compelled to walk therein. He has seen Jesus, seen Him in glory, and knows what that sight implies, and God has given him three days of enforced seclusion from all outward concerns, that he may carefully ponder the all important question of that heavenly vision, and then freely and deliberately decide.

Gently led by Him who comforts the mourners, Saul of Tarsus prayed. These were the sighings of a contrite heart. Again he saw a vision. A man named Ananias seemed to come into his solitary lodging, and put his hands upon him, and he saw. The prophetic vision was speedily accomplished. A man of that very name presently stood in the street called Straight, at the door of the house of

Judas, and enquired for Saul of Tarsus. They admitted him to the chamber where their blind visitor was. Ananias scanned the countenance of him who had done so much harm at Jerusalem, but saw nothing to alarm him now. Pale and wan from his long abstinence though he was, there was a quiet composure about his face that told of a great change having passed over him. Jesus may command him now: he will take His yoke upon him, and bear his burden. Subdued and humble, he waits a penitent at the door of Mercy. Contrite and teachable, he seeks admission into that society that before he persecuted. Before him stands the Divinely commissioned porter of the gate. With kind and gentle touch, Ananias laid his hands upon him. "Brother Saul," said he, "receive thy sight," and forthwith there dropped from his eyes as it had been scales. Looking up upon the face of Ananias, he heard him say, "The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know His will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of His mouth. For thou shalt be His witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. And now why tarriest thou? arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." The rite of baptism was at once and cheerfully submitted to, and the once proud scholar of Gamaliel, the Pharisee of the Pharisees, became a disciple of Him who was crucified between the thieves. There was no need to say to Ananias he was happy; his face would show it. And if for some time he could find nought more voiceful than a heaving bosom, and smiled only in his tears, all who know the bliss of pardon will understand him. He would learn to speak presently, I think—we know of whom—and if we know not in what words his new-born soul found utterance for its joys, or what was the melody of his first song of salvation, we do know the key note of the music, and whose was the name round which all his happiness clung. Time and place make no difference in this. All the world over, and all the ages through, the joys of pardon are alike, and wheresoever that man is to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, JESUS is

"The name that charms our fears,
That bids our sorrows cease,
'Tis music in the sinner's ears
'Tis life, and health, and peace."

It was so here, and so now, when, in the bliss of his first espousals, Saul of Tarsus cast himself at the feet of *Christ!*

A very short time elapsed before the new disciple began to confess his Master before men. Straightway, says St. Luke, he preached Christ in the synagogues, and very powerfully too. His was a proving sort of preaching, the sort that has an end in view, and gets to it. There is much that goes by the name of preaching, that, for all the good it does, might almost as well be delivered to a lot of paving stones. Airy, unsubstantial stuff it is, arrayed in divers garments, it is true, but agreeing beautifully in this, that it seems to aim at hitting men anywhere but in the heart, and arousing anything except the conscience, and saving anything about a man except his soul. Some of it is poetical, and some historical, and some archæological, and some metaphysical, and some of it is humdrum, and some of it is clever, and some of it is sprightly, and some of it is stilted, and some of it goes off like clockwork, warranted to run for a certain time, and some of it can hardly go off at all, but it's like a man who is going nowhere in particular, and doesn't mind much how he gets there: which errand some of the preaching of to-day very faithfully performs. Saul's preaching was not like that, either then or afterwards. It was a convincing preaching; a preaching that made sinners feel uneasy, and comforted saints; that made Pharisees look daggers at him, and hypocrites want to get out of the place; that aroused the sleepers, alarmed the easy, confounded the scoffers, and stirred up evil men and the devil against him, everywhere. Something of this it accomplished here at Damascus. The first impression of the Jews was amazement that the persecutor had become the champion. It was unaccountable to them that he should have come all the way from Jerusalem to put down this way, and now turn round, and do his best to set it up. The second impression was one of mingled mortification and wonder that they had no means of replying to him. But they had not: not a man of them could stand before him. Their choicest arguments weren't worth a straw; their cleverest disputants stood like dunces before him. He took them on their own ground, the Scriptures, and proved, plainly, repeatedly, incontestably proved,

concerning Jesus of Nazareth that he is very Christ. Their third impression was that such a fellow was not fit to live, so they took measures to carry it into effect, and watched the gates day and night to kill him. The plot was known, however, and the disciples frustrated it, by letting down their new comrade by the wall one dark night in a basket, and thus he escaped for a time from this first of those 'perils by his own countrymen,' of which he was afterwards to have so large a share. But between his first preaching at Damascus, and this hurried flight to Jerusalem, many days had elapsed, which we learn from one of his letters extended over three years, and included a journey into Arabia. As to the incidents of that journey, history is silent. Perhaps before he entered upon his great work, it was needful that he should be instructed in the way of the Lord more perfectly, and there may have been an analogy, in more senses than one, between this retirement into Arabia, and that other retirement of one greater than Saul, of whom we are told, that He was "led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil."

This visit to Jerusalem, though full of interesting incident, lasted only about a fortnight when the place became too hot for him, and under express orders from his Master, he left it for Tarsus, grieved and astonished that such a testimony as his should be, could be, so strangely ignored.

Not long after this, tidings came to the church at Jerusalem that there was a great religious movement taking place in Antioch. Some of the disciples, who had been scattered in the persecution that arose about Stephen, had travelled up there, and though it is not very clear that they were ordained, had been preaching Christ to the Gentiles. But the preaching was of the right sort, whether they were in orders or not, for a great number were converted to Christ in consequence. It was thought advisable to send Barnabas up there to see how things were going on, and to exercise a godly discipline. So Barnabas came, and reconnoitred the field of action, and was glad to see that the battle was the Lord's. He entered into the work heartily, and so successfully that, as in the case of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, his very success

became burdensome. The work grew too heavy for his single shoulders to bear, so he bethought him of a friend and brother, not very far off, who was just the man to help him, and departed to Tarsus to seek Saul. The two friends journeyed back to Antioch with all speed, and during a whole year cast the net on the right side of the ship. Vast numbers joined the ranks of the believers, and what had been faintly hinted at as possible, was now proclaimed as a glorious reality, that God had granted unto the Gentiles repentance unto life.

Antioch is memorable for many things. Its situation was all that could be desired for the purposes of trade and commerce. The various monarchs, who had had rule over that district, had enriched it with many and magnificent buildings, and art and science contributed to make this Syrian city one of the most famous in all the East. But like most of the oriental cities under the Roman Empire, the morale of its society was exceedingly low. Frivolous and immoral, coarse and licentious to the highest degree were the habits of its population, so that it was not merely the greatest city of the East, but the worst. It is specially memorable to us, because there the Gospel won, in the domains of heathendom, some of its first and choicest victories, because it was so long the centre of Paul's missionary labours, and last, but not least, because the sect everywhere spoken against found there that honourable and glorious name which it bears to-day, for "the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch."

One of the best tests of a man's christian character is what and how he does with his money. So it comes to pass that a collection is a revealer of secrets. Some of the disciples don't take kindly to it, and you may see they don't. They are slow of heart to discern its necessity, and cannot easily perceive any privilege in it. The luxury of giving is not among their pleasures, and its superior blessedness is scarcely an article of their creed. I am glad to say that it is not always so. There are and have been very many honourable exceptions, and Antioch ranks among the earliest. A great famine swept over the empire, in the days of Claudius, which severely pressed upon the christians at Jerusalem. The brethren at

Antioch felt that, having been so largely indebted to them for the imperishable Bread, it was their high privilege, not to say their duty, to minister to them in carnal things, so they made a collection with right good will, and sent it to their poorer brethren by the hands of Barnabas and Saul. So the second time since his conversion, Saul of Tarsus stood within the walls of Jerusalem, and, in the seasonable offering which he presented to the elders, bore significant witness that his Gentile brethren belonged, in very deed, to that school that adds to its godliness, brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity.

They returned to Antioch, and when that year was over, a yet wider work lay before them. As the church at Antioch were holding a solemn convocation, and praying with fasting, the Great Spirit who takes of the things of Christ said, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." With unquestioning faith and instant obedience, the two chiefest men in that church were given up to this Divinely appointed service, and sent away, with the imposition of hands, to go whithersoever the Lord might lead them. They went by Seleucia to Cyprus: through the island to Paphos, where Sergius Paulus crowned allegiance to the Emperor by discipleship to Christ. There Elymas withstood them, and was blinded for his pains; there, too, the Apostle is first called by his Roman name of Paul. From Paphos they took ship to Perga, where John Mark rather strangely left them. Thence they went to the Pisidian Antioch, and through Iconium and Lystra to Derbe; and so back again on their own footsteps to Syrian Antioch. This first missionary journey was a rough one, but not without success. Through hidden and open dangers, toils and snares, had the Captain of their salvation gently led their way, and all that they had seen, and heard, and felt only deepened the impression that the old distinctions were for ever done away, and that in Jesus Christ, there was neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free.

Such an impression as this they greatly needed to enable them to meet a new danger, the seeds of which had been long sown amongst them, and were soon to be ripened

into noxious fruit It was the Judaizing difficulty. How the first Council of the Christian Church dealt with it, you all remember. Freedom became more free, and there was great joy at Antioch.

It has always been a christian duty not to suffer sin upon a brother, but in anywise to rebuke him, yet it has not often been easy to perform it. It requires great delicacy of feeling, and soundness of judgment; and singleness of eye; otherwise there is considerable danger of the remedy proving worse than the disease. There now occurred a necessity for Paul to undertake it, for a brother had sinned at Antioch, and that brother was an apostle. What brought Peter there now, we don't know, but he was guilty of gross inconsistency with regard to this very question that had just been agitated. At first he associated with Gentiles freely and openly, but when some came from James, he shunned his former friends, and acted as if he still believed what he told Cornelius he did once, that it was an unlawful thing for a Jew to keep company with, or come unto, one of another nation. His example so infected others, that even Barnabas was carried away with it for a time, and things looked so serious, that Paul felt he must speak for the honour of his Lord and Master, which accordingly he did, and withstood Peter to his face; a painful exercise, we may be sure, but another proof of how deeply he had entered into the meaning of his Lord's seemingly harsh words;—"If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."

After this trouble with St. Peter, another painful thing occurred at Antioch. Paul proposed to Barnabas to revisit the scenes of their former toil. This his friend was nothing loth to do, but wished to take with him his kinsman John Mark, nay, was set upon it. Paul thought that one who had proved himself unworthy in the day of battle before, shouldn't be taken into the field a second time, and opposed his going with them. The contention was sharp between them. 'Ah then,' some one says, 'even good men can fall out a little it seems.' Stop a bit: perhaps they can, but before any Mr. Snarling deduces from this a license to indulge in his favourite pursuit, let him remem-

ber what this contention was about, and how noble the motives on either side. Barnabas erred perhaps on the side of natural affection for his nephew, and perhaps Paul may have dwelt a little too strongly upon the solemn words of Jesus:—"No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God." I am not here to say that neither was faulty in this, but I cannot help remembering that some men's faults are better than other men's virtues, and I had rather bear the blame of Paul's contention, than wear the honours of Mr. Snarling's or Miss Quarrelsome's peace.

This ended in their separation, and both departed to serve Christ in different spheres, Barnabas to his native isle of Cyprus, and Paul, accompanied by Silas, through Syria and Cilicia, to the scenes of his former toil. At Lystra, Timothy became their travelling companion, highly recommended by all the brethren, and at Alexandria Troas, a small town on the north western coast of Asia Minor, the beloved physician Luke. Thence they sailed to Neapolis, and then through the country northward to Philippi, where they met with no small difficulty, but found great grace to meet it. Thence they went through Amphipolis and Apollonia to Thessalonica, where they encountered another storm, and were charged with an offence so remarkable that I don't want to forget it. At least their friend Jason bore the brunt of it for them. The mob dragged him and some others before the magistrates, crying:—"These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also, and these all do contrary to the decrees of Cæsar saying that there is another King, one Jesus." I am glad these irate theologians were willing to admit, what certain polished scribes of eighteen centuries later have questioned, that the faith of these christian heretics was not nerveless and impotent. It could at least do something, and if their wrath did not mislead them, that something was a good deal. I'm glad, too, that they put it rightly. To tickle it, to tease it, to trifle with it, to threaten it, to talk with it, to terrify it, to taunt it, to teach it, to test it, were more than a little, but Christianity can do more than that: it can turn the world inside out, if you like; wrong-side right; but certainly, upside down. Towards this glorious consummation, it has already done

more than any faith that the world has known before it, and it will presently do it altogether. Without doubt the world needs such a handling. The wrong things have got to the upside in the world's constitution, and need to be put down. Pride needs putting down; bigotry needs putting down; ignorance needs putting down; laziness and dawdling and dirt need putting down; swindling, whether big or little, needs putting down; the drinking habits of society need putting down; sectarian bitterness and sabbath desecration need putting down; social extravagance, theatrical impurity, literary chaff-cutting, sceptical sophistry, political time-serving, ecclesiastical simony, religious toys and quackeries of all sorts, need putting down, and every sin and folly that has cursed the world since the first in Eden needs putting down, and will be put down, and kept down, in the days that are coming; for what these Thessalonians said was true, there was, there is, another king, one Jesus; and when He takes to Himself His mighty power, not only will wrong things be put down, but right things will be put uppermost. Then truth shall be up, and honesty shall be up, and virtue and gentleness shall be up, and peace, and order, and equity, and honour, shall be up, and brotherly kindness shall be up, and charity shall be up, and wisdom, and grace, and holiness, shall be up; and in that day

> "When all good things are uppermost,
> And all bad things are down,
> When sin and Satan lick the dust,
> And Jesus takes the crown."

The world shall make gladsome Jubilee, high Hallelujahs shall ring through the courts of Heaven, and He that sitteth on the throne shall say:—"It was meet that we should make merry and be glad, for this my son was dead, and is alive again, he was lost, and is found!"

The rough clamour of this mob resulted in no rougher usage to the Apostle or Jason, than taking security of the latter, I suppose that the peace of the city should not be disturbed, and the dismissal of the case. Without any delay the brethren sent Paul and Silas away by night unto Berœa. Here they found a people of a nobler sort; a people who did not believe that rotten eggs and brickbats were the proper defences of orthodoxy, but searched the

Scriptures daily whether those things were so. Searching in this spirit, they found a blessing, and Paul made many converts, but when those pugilists of Thessalonica got to hear of it, they despatched a gang of their religious "lambs" to Berœa, who succeeded in getting up a row against the Apostle, so that flight became necessary, at least for Paul, but Silas and Timothy remained there still.

We find him next in the centre of Greek civilisation, the city of Aristotle and Plato, Cimon and Themistocles, Phidias and Solon, Socrates and Zeno, beautiful but blinded Athens. There was much there to charm the cultivated taste, and to please one who merely travelled for pleasure. The city was full of beautiful things. Nature and Art had twined for it their choicest garlands. Temples, statues and altars, colonnades and porticoes, baths and picture galleries, joined with imposing processions, gorgeous ceremonials, and all the bustle and glitter of gay city life, to make Athens a fit haunt for the pleasure seeker, while the assemblies in the Agora and the Areopagus, and the schools of the Lyceum and Academy, would be no mean attraction to the student. But the christian Apostle had other business to attend to. Alone in the midst of a godless city, he burned to deliver his message of salvation. His spirit was stirred within him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry. So he spoke first in the Jewish synagogues, and in the market daily, concerning Christ. Some of the wise men encountered him, and called him a babbler. Others asked respectfully for further information, for he preached to them what seemed like two new gods in Jesus and the Resurrection, and they wished to know the truth about it, so they brought him to the hill of Mars that overlooked the Agora. Opposite were the lofty crags of the Acropolis, crowned by the bronze Colossus of Minerva; close by, the temple of the god of war; and shrines and temples were around him on every side. With christian prudence he made their excessive care about religion, which these multitudinous altars so clearly showed, the starting point of his speech, and whom they ignorantly worshipped, in impassioned and eloquent language, he declared to them. I need not say that before he finished he had found a way to Christ. Then, when they heard about His resurrection,

some began to mock, and others said they would hear him again some day, and so the assembly dispersed, too little affected it would seem to resort to either sticks or stones. Some few, however, believed, but it does not appear that, among these cultivated tittle-tattlers and well-bred news-hunters, any very considerable success was attained.

Corinth was the next place on his line of march. Here he stayed in the house of Aquila, and after manufacturing tents all the week, used to preach on the Sabbath in the synagogue. When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, he pressed on his spiritual work all the more earnestly, which provoked such opposition from the Jews, that he solemnly told them that from thenceforth he would go unto the Gentiles. A year and six months he stayed there, writing during that time the two letters to the Thessalonians. During that time, too, the Jews managed to drag Paul to the judgment seat of Gallio, but the biter was bit, for Gallio wouldn't have such rascals about him, and drove them away in high dudgeon, and then Sosthenes got a sound beating from the Greeks, which he richly deserved, but never reckoned upon. Some time after Paul left the Achaian capital, for a wonder without being hounded out, and passing through Cenchreæ, Ephesus, Cæsarea and Jerusalem, came to Antioch, having now completed his Second Missionary journey.

After a while, how long is not said, he began his third and last recorded tour. The route lay through Galatia, and Phrygia to Ephesus, where he stayed three years. Then through Macedonia and Greece for some nine or ten months. Then from Philippi across the sea to Troas, and so by Miletus, Tyre, Ptolemais to Cæsarea and Jerusalem. A great weight was on his mind all the way through. In almost every city some intimation was given him that bonds and afflictions were waiting for him. His own companions wept, and besought him not to go up to the Holy City. But he had heard a higher voice than all commanding him to go, and he said he was ready not only to be bound at Jerusalem for Christ's sake, but to die.

The day after the arrival of the Missionary party, there was a kind of reception meeting held. All the elders were

there, and James the Just was at their head. The Missionaries told their story. All rejoiced to hear it. But there was a difficulty just then. Thousands of the Jews believed, but had a wrong impression about Paul and his doctrine. To remove that, would he consent to go through a simple ceremony with some Nazarites they had with them? He would and did. For some days all things went on well, but some Jews from the neighbourhood of Ephesus saw him in the Temple, pointed him out, then stirred up the people, and the usual result followed, a tremendous outcry, and a running together from all parts of the city. Some strong fellows had got hold of him, and were beating him with all their might, and it would very soon have been all over with the Apostle, but Lysias rushed down just in the nick of time with a band of soldiers, and rescued him. It was easy to do that, for the Tower of Antonia was close by the Temple, and at that disturbed time some of the Roman legionaries were always kept under arms, and could be in the Temple court directly, if occasion required. Lysias wanted to know what he had done. Some cried one thing, and some another, but they made such a noise over it, no one could make out what they meant, so Lysias said, Take him into the castle. The soldiers closed around him, and began to move, but the mob became more excited than ever. Paul then asked if he might speak to them, and, receiving permission, stood on the castle stairs, and told them his wonderful story. There was a dead stillness till he had got as far as his commission to the Gentiles, but all of a sudden there was such a roar into the air and shouting, such throwing up of dust and clothes, that Lysias had him into the castle at once, that he might find out the reason for this strange commotion. They were going to scourge him, but his Roman citizenship saved him that. That night he lay in prison. On the morrow he stood where, some thirty years before; Stephen had stood before the Sanhedrin. That led to nothing but another great row, this time amongst themselves, and Lysias had to interfere a second time to save the Apostle's life. That night he saw his Master, very glorious, very loving, and very near him, who told him to be of good cheer. In the morning, forty Jewish miscreants swore a great oath that they would

have his blood, and laid their plot to do it. It came to the ears of Lysias, and a third time he interposed on his behalf, and sent him under strong escort to his superior officer Felix at Cæsarea. Five days after his arrival he was confronted with his accusers before the Governor. Tertullus led the van of the attack, and Paul defended himself. Felix didn't understand the case, and said he would wait till Lysias came down, and hear him again. He did hear him again, but one time in special, when before the godly reasoning of his prisoner, the proud Roman trembled with a sense of sin and guilt. For two years Paul was kept in confinement until Festus came into the province. The Jews were quick to inform the new Governor about his notorious prisoner, and he appointed a day to hear the case. Down came a host of Jews from Jerusalem again, and once more laid many and grievous complaints against the Apostle, which they could not prove. Festus' duty now was plain, but not wishing to anger his new acquaintances, he shirked it, and suggested another trial at Jerusalem. No, said Paul, "I stand at Cæsar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged:—no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Cæsar." This gave a new aspect to the affair. The case was taken out of Festus' hands, and he only kept him until opportunity offered of sending him to Rome. But before his departure thither, he had a very important audience with Herod Agrippa, king of Chalcis, in which the wisdom and gentleness of the Christianity he professed were seen in beautiful unity.

It has long been a favourite charge of irreligious men against the godly that, if they know how to pray, they do not know how to behave themselves, and I fear that, like the story books, it has sometimes been founded on fact Who hasn't met with the man who speaks his mind, and doesn't seem to care whom he hurts by it. Or the man who tells you he is plain but honest, but whose plainness is simply incivility. Or the man who says he hates your bowing and scraping and fine gentleman work, and proves it in his boorish habits to a demonstration. Rough and ready, some of them say they are, and one cannot easily refuse them their right to such a title. It seems as if the had never read the command, "Be courteous," or

confounded it with the shorter word "Be curt;" or that it was our duty in honour to prefer one another, for some are snappy and short, and some are overbearing and selfish, and some are sour and sullen, so that one almost wonders whether they have confounded politeness with hypocrisy, and have thought a gentleman the same sort of thing as a sneak. To me, this is one of the most honourable words in the language, 'the grand old name of gentleman.' To be a gentleman is not to dress in broadcloth, and wear patent leather boots, to twirl gilt-headed canes, and smoke cigars. It is not to have a footman bow to you, or to keep a brougham. Large gardens don't make a gentleman, nor large gifts. Grand pianos and great entertainments don't make one; nor is a man a gentleman because he can always travel first-class, or because silver plate is on his side-board, and gems from Italian masters hang in his drawing-room. But if courtesy without fawning, care without fussiness, refinement without affectation, simplicity without simpleness, and gentleness without effeminacy; if respect for others' feelings, a willingness to listen to others' opinions, and a readiness to defer to others' wishes; if honesty, frankness, transparency and moderation, and above all a large heart to do good to others; if all these go to make a gentleman, then are there many gentlemen whose clothes are rough, and whose hands are horny; then of this science is Christianity the best preceptress, the Gospel the most advanced text-book, and the tentmaker of Tarsus one of its most illustrious embodiments; to whom above his brethren must be accorded praise, not merely for his faithfully holding, but for his singular proficiency in adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

St. Paul did not merely return a gentlemanly answer when Festus called him mad, but a true one. He said, "Not mad, most noble Festus," and all the centuries since have never been able to disprove that answer. Poor Festus! perhaps he said what he thought, but some thoughts are not worth much. The men that have them couldn't see the things they talked of. Very likely to this Roman Judge, from his standpoint among the shrines of Cybele and Venus, of Jupiter and Bacchus, of Mercury and Mars, Paul's life would look mad enough, but this

citizen of Tarsus has seen Calvary and Jesus, and things look different when a man has seen them. No, not mad, most noble Festus, or if mad, the right sort of insanity. More of this kind of madness the world could well do with to-day. A little more of Paul's madness would do no harm to many churches now, and some ministers might not be any the worse for it either. Some of us are as correct as a dictionary, and as straight as a ruler, and as orderly as a chess-board, and as proper as complete systems of theology can make us, and as harmless to the Devil's kingdom as so many poplar trees. Well, if that be compos mentis, I'd rather be non-compos with Paul. Better be a little mad in his way, and save many souls from death, than be sane in Festus' way, and preach so many sermons, and hold so many meetings, and give out so many hymns, and do nothing much, except crumpling the pulpit cushion a little more, and burning so much gas. Mad indeed! I would we were all as mad as Paul over this great question. I dare say some wouldn't like it. Lukewarm Laodiceans wouldn't like it, proud Pharisees wouldn't like it, religious slow-coaches wouldn't like it, beershop keepers and lessees of theatres wouldn't like it, misers and swindlers, and gamesters, and backbiters wouldn't like it, neither the world nor the Devil would like it, but all good men would like it, all holy angels would like it, God would like it; and in the great reckoning, tell me whether those who were thus beside themselves would like it or not, when those who were wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and those who turned many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.

It was probably high summer, or a little later, before Julius put his distinguished prisoner on board a ship of Adramyttium, and it was certainly not before the spring of the next year, that they disembarked in the bay of Naples at Puteoli. The incidents of that journey are so well known that I may be allowed to pass on quickly to its close. Some christian brethren lived in the city, and pressed the Apostle to remain with them a few days. Through the courtesy of Julius this was allowed, and then they travelled towards the imperial city. On the way a party of friends from Rome met them at Appii Forum, and about ten miles further on, at a place called the Three

Taverns, another company was waiting for them, whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage. Seventeen miles further brought them to Aricia, a town amongst the Alban hills, and just beyond it, they got their first view of Rome. The sixteen miles that still divided them from it would be soon travelled, and then the christian Apostle, who had been in many and great cities, stood in the largest and greatest, if not the vilest of them all, the mistress and metropolis of the world.

It is not easy to describe the city as it was when Paul saw it. A great number of the ruins that make modern Rome so interesting to the traveller were not even new then. The great wall of Aurelian and Belisarius was yet to be built. The wall that then surrounded the city was the one built by Servius. The Basilica of Constantine; the baths of Titus, Diocletian, and Caracalla; the arches of Hadrian, Septimus Severus, Dolabella; many of the obelisks and columns that graced the city in a later age were yet to be. Outside the wall, multitudes of houses stretched for miles into the country. The people, inside especially, were crowded together. Within a circuit of little more than twelve miles, more than two millions of people lived. The streets were for the most part very narrow, and many of the houses very high. Like the great cities of to-day, it was full of contrasts. Palatial magnificence and grovelling wretchedness; marble colonnades and dark slums inches deep in mud; golden roofed temples and rows of the shabbiest lodging houses; art and wealth and beauty not a stone's throw from ugliness and dirt, and the peak and pine of miserablest poverty. The morals of the city were not good. There was nothing in heathenism to make them good. If example had anything to do with it, the people were in evil case, for the pattern set them by the Emperor and his family was as bad as it well could be. Weak and vain, vicious, consummately so, a blood-thirsty rake and robber, Nero was more like a monster than a man. Many of them copied it only too faithfully. A great part of the population lived on public charity, and cared for little else than their daily allowance of corn from the public treasuries, the games of the circus, and the brutal excitement of the gladiatorial shows. There were about a million of slaves in the city. It was

a vile place, this city of Rome, a veritable stables of Augeus that sorely needed the coming of some christian Hercules to cleanse it. It found the right man in Paul.

For some reason not plainly told us, the hearing of his case was long delayed, and during that time he was permitted every indulgence consistent with military surveillance. The law compelled him to be chained to a soldier by one arm night and day, but the Prætorian Prefect Burrus permitted him to reside in his own hired house, and allowed him everything except actual freedom that he could have desired, so that for two years he preached boldly, to all who came to visit him, the things which concern the Lord Jesus, no man forbidding him. The effect of those appeals, both upon his own countrymen and the Gentiles, we know to have been very great. Converts to Christianity became numerous, and some of them were found even in Cæsar's palace. Nor must we forget that, during this captivity, he wrote that most beautiful letter that we call the Epistle to Philemon, and also the Epistles to Ephesus and Colosse. During that period Epaphroditus visited him, bearing a most grateful present from the church at Philippi, and took back with him the epistle that contains less of censure, and more of praise, than all his other writings. And during that period, who shall say how many of the rough soldiers, who were chained to him, were melted down by the christliness of his demeanour, and persuaded to become both almost and altogether such as he was. At the close of two years, the clear light of the inspired narrative fades, and for the Apostle's subsequent history, we are left to the dimmer radiance of tradition. All the evidence that can be collected goes to establish the fact, that the imprisonment in which St. Luke leaves him was not final, and was followed by a period of liberty, in which his apostolic message was proclaimed even unto farthest Spain. The charge against him broke down before the imperial tribunal, as it must have done, if anything like justice dwelt at Rome, and he was set free. We have no means of knowing exactly how that liberty was employed, except that we are sure that he spared no pains, that such a one as Paul the aged could put forth, to extend the knowledge of his Lord and Master. Probably not more than five years elapsed before he was

again arrested, at whose suit, or on what charge, we can only conjecture. His second letter to Timothy was written some time after that, and we can see from it that his imprisonment is much worse than before. It is dangerous for any one to side with him. None of his companions are with him now but Luke; some are away, some have forsaken him. The first hearing of the case is already over. It would seem that a large concourse listened to his defence, but he has no hope of ultimate release; he is merely remanded. It is clear to him now that his days are numbered. He is not afraid of the issue, but he clings to human friendship still, and in this second letter to his son Timothy, we see how anxious he was to look once more upon the face of a friend. The confinement is close and harsh, and the wind blows chill and cold about his prison walls; will Timothy do his utmost to bring that cloak from Troas before the winter? We are sure he would, if he were able, and we would fain hope that he arrived in time to see his Master, and to soothe with some kindly offices of affection his latest hours.

The end came at last, the final hearing of his case resulting in sentence of death. He was well prepared for it. From the hideous tortures to which many of his brethren had been lately subjected his Roman citizenship saved him. His must be death by decapitation. We know not at what hour of the day the Roman lictors came to summon their prisoner for his last earthly journey, whether in the grey dawn, or at the sultry noontide, or when the soft winds of evening blew coolly over the wide Campagna. We know not what curious eyes were turned on the small troop of soldiers that marched slowly out of the city, on the road to Ostia, with a grey haired man in the midst, nor on how many faces there gathered consternation, as devout men saw that it was the great Apostle; and when some little distance from the city the Roman captain called a halt, and bade the executioner do his office, we know not who stood by, and prayed God give the dying saint an easy quittance, nor can we tell whose were the friendly hands that slowly raised the body of the martyr, and gently and reverently laid it in the tomb. But we do know something of the holy triumph that swelled the bosom of this faithful disciple,

called at last to follow his Lord without the gate; we do know something of the calm courage with which he gazed upon the glittering steel; we do know something of the blessed hope that gave new vigour to that feeble form, and lent a strange glory to that worn and pallid face; we do know something of that companionship that never fails believers, and is always sweetest when they need it most, and we can faintly imagine what songs of triumph would burst from the ranks of watching seraphim, as the happy spirit of this Apostle, Prophet, and Martyr, freed from the trammels of mortality, took its "last triumphant flight, from Calvary's to Sion's height."

We call that a noble army that he entered. It was a noble army then, but many a brave heart has joined it since. The name of Stephen was already on its roll book, and that of James, but there was a vacant space for Peter's. Phocas had not joined it, nor Ignatius, nor Polycarp; it wanted Germanicus and Justin, Irenæus and Cyril, John Huss and Jerome of Prague, Thomas Bilney and John Lambert, Anthony Pearson and George Wishart, Anne Askew and Jane Grey: it wanted Cranmer and Ridley, Latimer and Hooper, John Rogers, John Bradford and John Leaf: it wanted Philpot and Bradbridge, Hudson and Kempe, Eagles and Allerton: it wanted William Threlfall, and John Williams, and Thomas Baker, and a host of others, of whom the world was not worthy, who counted not their lives dear unto them so that they might win Christ, and are found in Him to-day, exalted above their fellows, decked with a diadem of more than ordinary splendour, and bearing on their serene and lofty forehead a name of more magnificent renown.

Thus lived and laboured, and thus died, the last, but not the least, in the glorious company of the Apostles. In many things he is of necessity very far above us. Those miraculous gifts of the Spirit, which were at once a marvel and a glory to the early church, and in which he so greatly excelled, we can never know; the restless energy, keen insight, varied and extensive learning, the scholarly precision, classical taste, and logical acuteness that so distinguished him, may be gifts that we shall never share; but the humility, the patience, the gentleness, the truth, the whole-heartedness, the unswerving fidelity to principle, the

deep love of all that was noble and good in God's word, and the abhorrence of all that was mean and false; the earnestness that goldened all with its own glory, and made him a model christian and a model man, are surely not beyond our imitation. Let us try to copy them, and let it hearten us in this hallowed exercise to remember that the mercy, of which he was so impressive a monument, is ours for the asking, and the grace he so richly experienced is flowing like a river, and though

> "Millions there have been supplied,
> Still it flows as free as ever,
> From the Saviour's wounded side."

Of the many writings that bear his name, I have neither time nor ability to speak as they deserve. Anything from such a man would have been eagerly welcomed, but when to the force and fire of great natural gifts is added the illumination of the risen One, we are not surprised that men should treasure up the result with a respect that becomes veneration. Other men have spoken and written concerning the kingdom that cometh not with observation, but I should think it may be very fairly questioned if the writings of any one man have done more, nay, as much, towards its establishment as those which bear the signature and seal of him who called it to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God.

That kingdom yet waits for its perfect glory. Evil of many kinds is still rampant in the earth. A bold Naturalism trifles and tampers with revealed truth. Poetry, in the pod of flower, is in many places in the ascendant. A flippant Scepticism still sets its battle in array, and there are who bear upon their face the show and sheen of brazen infidelity. Yet are there many places, dark and dank with the mists of Paganism, and filled with habitations of cruelty, and on many a height of espial and coign of vantage, the eye of the watchman almost wearies for the day. Yet is that day approaching, and we are nearer this night to its dawning than when we first believed: nearer to its hallowed peace, and glorious brotherhood: nearer its defeat of falsehood, and the victory of truth; nearer its branding of meanness, and the crowning of honour: nearer its beating of swords into ploughshares, and spears into pruning hooks; nearer its

songs of deliverance, and anthems of joy; nearer its untroubled friendship, and world-wide liberty, and undissembled love; nearer the day when every house shall be a Bethel, and the world shall be called "the city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel," and when shall be accomplished the ancient prophecy of Isaiah, "Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise. Thy Sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself; for the Lord shall be thy everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended."

SPEECH

Delivered at the Annual Missionary Breakfast Meeting, held on Saturday, April 28th, 1877, at the City Terminus Hotel, Cannon Street, London.

THE TARRYING VISION.

It would be a comfort to me now if I could use the time-honoured formula with which practised speakers are accustomed to glide along the slippery levels of opening sentences, and say, with a good conscience, "I am delighted to be present in this meeting." Perhaps, Sir, you will allow me to use it with a difference, and simply to say, before plunging *in medias res*, that, by all I see and hear at this Missionary Anniversary, I am considerably interested and not a little impressed. So much for the personal feeling of one who was never at one of your May meetings or on a London platform before, and whose pleasure of listening is taken a little grievously through the prospect of having himself to speak. The summons from your accomplished Secretary to come over from the Troas of my northern Circuit to this monstrous Macedonia, as you may imagine, set me thinking, and the upshot of it has been that I have had a vision, and I should like, if this much may be allowed me, to tell this audience what it was I saw. Yet it was not in the night when deep sleep falleth upon man, but in the broad day, bright with flashing sunbeams; nor in some lonely glen amongst the hills, but in the midst of our busy town, smoky and noiseful; nor was it under the spell of some poetic wizard, but with the book before me that speaks of Calvary and Christ, that

> **"I looked into the future far as human eye could see,**
> **And saw the vision of the world and all the wonder that would be."**

It was, indeed, the world; this world, our world, but changed. Not, indeed, its outward features. The wooded plains, the bounding lines of wold and fell and mountain, the rivers broadening to the sea, the streams that run among the hills, were all there, little changed, if changed at all; but the men were changed that lived there. Saxon, Celt, and Cymri—those were terms still used, but there was a bond of brotherhood among them not known to-day. Business was there as of yore, not slothful; but the greed was gone, and the keenness was no longer cruel; and the folly, and the trickery, and the fraud were gone like a dream when one awaketh. And so was pleasure there, but frivolity had passed, and the sensual had become the spiritual, and the idle and the selfish and the base had vanished too. And towns were large, and cities great, and villages many as before, but with happier souls there had been born to men a better sense, and they no longer herded families in what was little better than a pigstye, or courted fevers by living just above the cesspool and the drain. And men were in different rank and station, but it seemed as if the age of gold had come again when

> "—None were for a party,
> But all were for the State;
> And the rich man helped the poor man,
> And the poor man loved the great."

For the ancient spite and party feud were gone, and they had learnt in honour to prefer one another. And they were set in families, but the children were obedient to their parents, and the fathers provoked not their children unto wrath, but brought them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. And the old idea of uniformity was an idea still—for the Church went forth bearing many banners—but I heard no quarrelling in the camp:—Judah did not vex Ephraim, and Ephraim did not envy Judah. Men sat in Parliament and Synod, but strove for truth not triumph, and Government was not in the subtlety of Macchiavelli, but in the simplicity of Christ. And there were no longer spent Kings' ransoms in wondrous ironclads that when you touched them in a fog went incontinently to the bottom and lay there, or the revenues of a province in the doubtful blessing of a standing army; for the swords were beaten into plough-

shares and the spears into pruning hooks. And I noticed that there were no mothers giving babies gin to drink at the doors of gorgeous saloons; no fair young maidens, no ingenuous youths flinging away health and happiness and honour at the shrine of the drunkard's Moloch; no little children pulling with tiny hand the ragged coat of a graceless father, and begging him with sobs to come home. They had somehow solved the problem of the workman and his Sabbath worship, for he came and sat among his wealthier brethren, and the Lord was the Maker of them all. And looking across this streak of silver sea I saw that careless France had become beautiful in holiness, and Spain was ennobled with the dignity of goodness, and they of Italy—sunny Italy—once more were sending greetings to the saints at Corinth, and boasting of the faith of old Achaia; and the Eastern Question was dead and buried, and our Western question too—of the Syllabus and the Index, and the teaching *ex cathedrâ*, and the Christ-dishonouring superstition that has its seat in Rome —that was buried too. And I saw that ancient people, through whose casting away there came about the reconciling of the world, received again, and that receiving of them was like life from the dead. And I saw all Africa was civilized and one in Christ Jesus, and in that holy unity there was neither black nor white, nor bond nor free. And in Him Arabia at last was truly "Felix:" and India had cast aside her multitudinous idolatries; and China, standing on the broad foundation of prophets and apostles, bade all the world a most brotherly welcome in Christ Jesus; and along the steppes of Central Asia I watched them feeding their countless flocks and singing of that Good Shepherd who laid down His life for the sheep. And towards the Western sun I saw that men were free and yet His bond slaves, enlightened, yet not so much by the flickering lights of science, as by the teaching of the Holy One, and happy, happier far in their willing service than ever in their careless license; and the islands of the sea had heard of Him, and sang to one another across their sunlit sweeps of water of His boundless grace, and there was one story every child could lisp, one memory that every nation cherished, one name that was above every name, for the earth was full of the knowledge of

the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. I said I have seen a vision, and yet not I alone. I may not put you, Sir, through your catechism, but I infer from the tone of your opening address that if you were asked whether you had ever had a similar experience you could give an answer. I feel pretty certain that there are not a few in this audience who could do the same. I fancied as I heard your Secretary give his statement that some such dream of blessedness had come to him before he set his statistical battle in array. And who shall question that the gentlemen who are to follow, to whose linked sweetness *not* long drawn out you will be delighted to listen, have each of them in his own way seen a similar vision, and dreamt a similar dream? But if they have not, others have who will stand here no more. Did not Charles Prest and Luke H. Wiseman see it? and Thomas Vasey and Samuel R. Hall? Did nothing of this kind move William Shaw, and William L. Thornton, and Samuel D. Waddy? What of William Dawson, and Robert Newton, and James Dixon, and Jabez Bunting? What of John Hannah, and Thomas Jackson, and Daniel J. Gogerly, and Thomas Squance? Were their pulses never stirred by such imaginings? O, Sir, we are in high and holy company to-day. Dream how we will about the glory that shall follow, the fathers of our Israel saw it all before us. If there be any disgrace about such dreaming, they shared it before we did: and if it is this that makes us visionary and fanatical, they also bore the brand, and bore it proudly, who in yon fair city see no longer "through a glass darkly, but face to face!" And yet the vision tarries. I will not say a word to take away from the effect of that hopeful and encouragement statement by the Secretary, but it seems to me the world is a long way off yet from being converted to God. The vision tarries. It tarries like the dawn sometimes seems to tarry to the weary watcher, who through the dull, slow hours of the night waits and tosses, and tosses and waits in pain. The vision tarries like the shore to many a home-sick voyager, who, after long sailing over the sea, looks every morning for the streak of white on the horizon, and only sees the same unbroken line of sea and sky. The vision seems to tarry. But we have done something. I believe the last fifty years

have seen a marvellous advance made towards the consummation of the Saviour's kingdom: but still it tarries. Now what have we done with regard to India? If I were to say we have done nothing there, there are brethren behind who would fall foul of me. We have done something. Yet, after all, looking at India and other places as well, what is the work that we, all Christian Churches put together, have been doing in the world for Christ Jesus? It seems to me it is something like this: We have lighted a lamp here and there, and held it out in the thick gloom, making darkness visible; we have dug a well or two of living water here at some Beersheba, and yonder at some far-off Dan; but only those close by can come and drink, while at Gibeah and Ajalon and Gilgal they are dying daily. Here and there we have sent into the high places of the field some Elijah, to be very zealous for the Lord of Hosts, but who shall presume to count the prophets of Baal that surround him? Only look at this question of numbers. I think I remember when we talked about eight hundred millions as the population of the world; but now it is accounted thirteen hundred millions. That simple question of numbers is almost enough—I was going to say, but God forbid—to frighten us. It shall not do that; but it will make us feel that it is no trifle to which we have given our heart and hand. They say, Sir, that in some countries, where everything is on a very large scale, the air is sometimes so clear that, after you have been pricking across the plain from dawn to sunset, the mountain that you want to gain will seem scarcely any nearer. It is something like that with us to-day. From the morning that began in May, 1876, till now, the friends and agents of this Society have been aiming to reach the far-off summit of completed victory. Across the plains of duty we have galloped hard and fast, and now as we rein in the steeds, and drive the tent pegs, and light the camp fires, there it is, still far away in the lessening daylight, rising rosy and radiant above the shadowy levels; and we know without a prophet that we shall have many a gallop yet before we reach it. The vision tarries! Well, what then? Why, we must wait for it, Sir, and we are here to-day to encourage one another to try. Yet there is waiting and waiting. There is the waiting that is born of

doubt, palsied and disconsolate. Must that be ours? God forbid! There is the waiting of luxurious ease. Is it that? God forbid! There is the waiting of careless indifference—*is it that?* What sort then? Surely that which shows the vigour of its hope by the energy of its toil, the waiting that means working, and that so much the more as it sees the day approaching; like the waiting of the farmer, who does not suffer the hope of sheaves in September to make him careless in the winds of March; like the waiting of the sailor, who knows that by and by he will see the harbour lights, but who does not therefore forget to consult the chart, to watch the compass, and hold the wheel. We want the spirit that holds by the assured issue, but reminds itself of the intermediate conditions, that clings to the promise of the Saviour, but remembers the process of its fulfilment. So we must labour while we wait, and labour that we may rightly wait. We must have the spirit that, while it rejoices over accomplished purposes, will not be impatient of the detail, that while it shouts at the bringing of the topstone, will not disdain to sing in the laying of the courses, that while it will do its best for the annual meeting and the great congregation, will not do less than that where candles gutter in the farmer's kitchen, or the village chapel, and a score or two of rustics make the gathering of the year. But though I say the vision of victory tarries, it only tarries, and the work of waiting must be done in hope. But not of a possible triumph! Possible is not the word to use. Of course, some things are possible. It is possible that France may once more conquer Germany; possible that Turkey may become hale and solvent instead of sick and bankrupt; possible that Spain may once more count for something when the crowned heads muster, and Portugal be something more than a dot of colour on the map of Europe; possible that Greece may once more cherish statesmen like Aristides or poets like Homer; possible that England may become corrupt through her prosperity; possible that in the ages yet to be that irrepressible native of the isles, you know where from, may come and sit—you know where—and gaze upon that classic picture of St. Paul's in ruins to his heart's content. It is right to say that this is possible, but it is not right to say that it is possible

that one day Jesus Christ may have the kingdom. What then? It is certain! You do not find it written, "Ask of Me, and I *may* give Thee the heathen for thine inheritance," &c., but, "I *shall*, &c. You do not find St. Paul saying, "He *may*," but, "He *must* reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet." And what if it does not come in our time? It will in somebody's. And what if we cannot explain the manner of its coming? Does any of us know the secret of the rosy fringe that rounds the daisy, or of the crystallizing of the falling snow-flakes, where the gorse gets the gold for its blooming, or how the rose distils its rich perfume? What if the marshalled forces of iniquity seem to our feeble sense a phalanx never to be broken? Cannot He that broke the might of Pharaoh find a way through their serried ranks? What if our zeal should flag, and our heart should be discouraged? Is there change and weakness with the Most High? What if in comparison of the hosts around us we are very few in number? Does He count for nothing who hath bidden us go upon this hallowed warfare? But for this, indeed, that God hath bidden us, that the cause we advocate to-day is far more His than ours, there would be no ground for hope. The project we are cherishing would be a weak and wildering dream; all our talking and working, and preaching and praying, but a beating of the air. But God is upon our side, and therefore will not we fear to-day. Let the vision tarry, we will wait for it,—for it will surely come, it will not tarry,—and herein shall be our confidence, that He who holds the winds in His fists and the waters in the hollow of His hand; who looks upon the hills and they tremble, who toucheth the mountains and they smoke; to whom the tempest that wrecks a navy, or the pestilence that destroys a nation, or the earthquake that engulfs a continent, or the fire that consumes a star is but as the hiding of His power; to whom the countless myriads of men are but as a drop of a bucket, and counted as the small dust of the balance; to whom in the awful NOW of whole eternity the past, the present, and the future are to the uttermost jot and tittle of the mighty record absolutely known; who for us men and for our salvation stooped to the unutterable sacrifice of Bethlehem and Calvary; that He—whatever we may do—that He will not fail nor be

discouraged until He have set judgment in the midst of the earth, and the crowding isles of this babbling world are waiting in submission for His law.

THE END.

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